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# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## PACIFIC

## Shots fired across DMZ after Kim reappears

By KIM GAMEL  
*Stars and Stripes*

SEOUL, South Korea — North and South Korean troops exchanged gunfire across the heavily fortified border Sunday, the South Korean military said, in the first shooting in the area in more than two years.

The incident occurred a day after North Korea released photos of leader Kim Jong Un making his first public appearance in nearly three weeks, tamping down speculation about his health.

The U.S.-led United Nations Command, which administers the area, said it will investigate whether there was a violation of the armistice that has existed since the 1950-53 Korean War.

The North Koreans fired first, with several bullets hitting a South Korean guard post at about 7:41 a.m. in a central part of the Demilitarized Zone, according to the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Seoul.

South Korean troops responded by firing 20 rounds of warning shots on two occasions and broadcasting warnings over loudspeakers, it said.

No casualties or significant damage were reported on the South Korean side.

South Korea later sent a notice calling for an explanation from the North Korean side via an inter-Korean communication line, but did not immediately receive a response, according to the JCS.

A JCS officer said the shooting did not appear to be an intentional provocation, although the

**SEE FIRED ON PAGE 5**



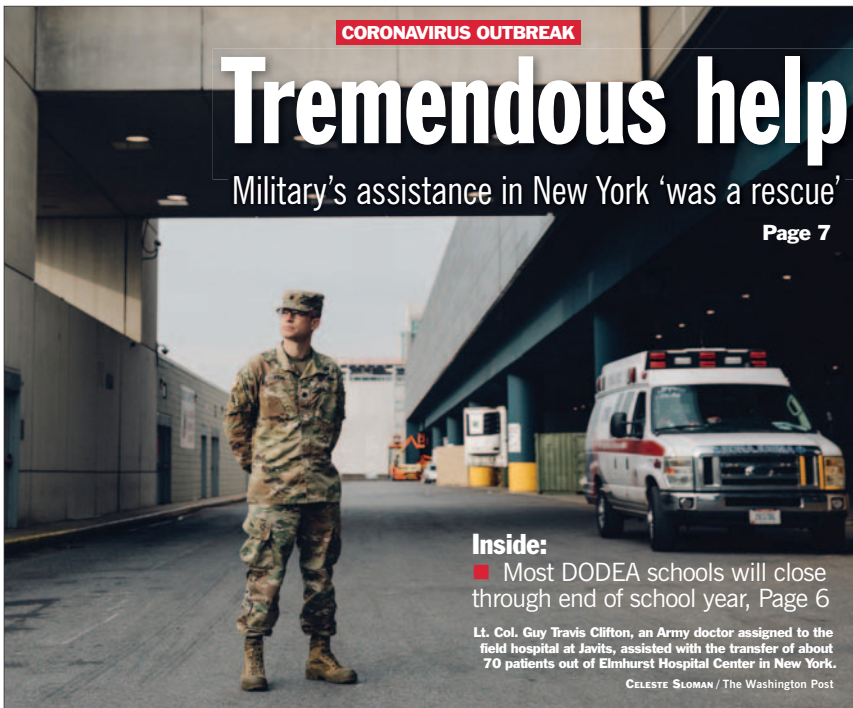
Kim

## CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

# Tremendous help

Military's assistance in New York 'was a rescue'

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## Inside:

■ Most DODEA schools will close through end of school year, **Page 6**

Lt. Col. Guy Travis Clifton, an Army doctor assigned to the field hospital at Javits, assisted with the transfer of about 70 patients out of Elmhurst Hospital Center in New York.

CELESTE SLOMAN / The Washington Post

## AP: Most states fall short of minimum testing thresholds

*Associated Press*

ATLANTA — As more states begin to relax their coronavirus lockdowns, most are falling short of the minimum levels of testing suggested by the federal government and recommended by a variety of public health researchers, an Associated Press analysis has found.

Three months into an unprecedented public health emergency, the White House has largely resisted calls for a coordinated plan to conduct the millions of tests experts say are needed to con-

tain the virus. What federal officials outlined recently isn't even an official benchmark, and AP's analysis found that a majority of states are not yet meeting it.

With no specific guidelines, states are left to figure out what a successful testing program should be while they simultaneously try to reopen their shattered economies. If states don't have robust testing, public health experts say they will be unable to detect outbreaks quickly enough to contain them, which could lead to more shutdowns.

"It's dangerous and irrespon-

## 'It's dangerous and irresponsible.'

**Lawrence Gostin**

public health specialist at Georgetown University

sible," said Lawrence Gostin, a public health specialist at Georgetown University.

In many states, testing has been limited to hospitalized patients, high-risk individuals and front-line workers. But most public health experts agree that containing the virus will require a massive expansion of testing

that eventually includes millions of patients without symptoms, which is not happening now.

A testing blueprint released Monday by the Trump administration lacked any metrics state officials could use to make informed decisions. Instead, the

**SEE MINIMUM ON PAGE 8**

## BUSINESS/WEATHER

## Buffett remains optimistic about the future

**BY JOSH FUNK**  
*Associated Press*

OMAHA, Neb. — Billionaire investor Warren Buffett doesn't know how or when the economy will recover from the coronavirus outbreak shutdown, but he remains optimistic in the long-term future of the United States.

Buffett said Saturday at Berkshire Hathaway's online annual meeting that there's no way to predict the economic future right now because the possibilities are

still too varied. Berkshire's meeting was held without any of the roughly 40,000 shareholders who typically attend because of the virus.

"We do not know exactly what happens when you voluntarily shut down a substantial portion of your society," Buffett said, because it's never been done. He said that it may take several years to realize all the economic implications of the outbreak, but it hasn't changed his long-term view because the U.S. has endured wars

and depressions before.

"In the end, the answer is never bet against America," Buffett said.

It's not clear how long the virus will continue to weigh on the economy, Buffett said. He said that there could still be unpleasant surprises from the virus and the way people react to it.

"You're dealing with a huge unknown," Buffett said, so businesses and investors can't be sure of what will happen in the near future.

## EXCHANGE RATES

Military rates		Swiss franc (Franc)	
Euro costs (May 4)	\$1.06	0.9515	
British pounds (May 4)	60.8961	12.4828	
British pound (May 4)	1.22	0.7014	
Japanese yen (May 4)	163.00		
South Korean won (May 4)	180.00		
Commercial rates		(Million) Exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance.	
Bahrain (Dinar)	0.3781		
British pound (May 4)	1.2484		
Canada (Dollar)	1.4975		
China (Yuan)	6.9212		
Denmark (Krone)	1.6848		
Egypt (Pound)	17.752		
Euro	\$1.0975		
Hong Kong (Dollar)	15.752		
Hungary (Forint)	126.87		
India (Rupee)	3.9581		
Japan (Yen)	32.87		
Kuwait (Dinar)	0.3094		
Norway (Krone)	10.3520		
Philippines (Peso)	50.586		
Poland (Zloty)	4.16		
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.4789		
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3166		
South Korea (Won)	180.00		
Swiss franc (Franc)	0.9515		
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9515		
Thailand (Baht)	32.48		
Turkey (Lira)	0.3628		
U.S. dollar	1.0000		
(Million) Exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance.			
For non-U.S. currency exchange rates in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For non-U.S. currency exchange rates in Germany, purchasing British pounds (in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to the euro, except for the U.S. dollar, which is represented in dollars-to-euro, and the euro, which is dollars-to-pound.			
INTEREST RATES			
Prime rate	3.25		
Discount rate	2.25		
Federal funds market rate	0.04		
3-month bill	0.10		
30-year mortgage	7.28		

## INTEREST RATES

Prime rate .....	3.25
Discount rate .....	0.25
Federal funds market rate .....	0.04
3-month bill .....	0.10
30-year bond .....	1.28

## WEATHER OUTLOOK

## MONDAY IN THE MIDDLE EAST



## MONDAY IN EUROPE

**TUESDAY IN THE PACIFIC**

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

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IN STRIPES

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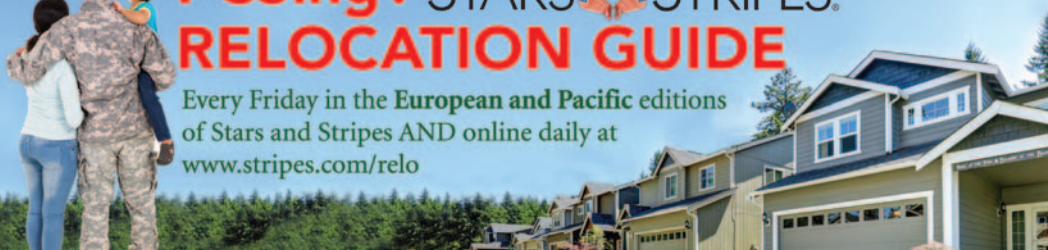
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## MILITARY

# 'Mountain of mail' sent after virus backlog

By CHAD GARLAND  
Stars and Stripes

Disruptions caused by the coronavirus pandemic led the Navy to send more than 40,000 pounds of backlogged mail to sailors throughout the Mediterranean via a "back door" through Bahrain and Africa.

Many of the commercial flights typically used to transport military mail from the U.S. to Europe, Africa and the Middle East were canceled, Navy officials said.

To get it all overseas, the service devised a "one-off" operation routing it from Chicago to Bahrain, then on to Camp Lemonnier in the tiny East African country of Djibouti, where twice-weekly airlift missions dubbed "CLJD Express" had been bringing critical medical supplies from Europe.

"Our N4 logistics team immediately volunteered ... to receive and push this mountain of mail to Europe on emerging 'CLJD Express' missions," Cmdr. Dustin Freeman, supply officer for the Djibouti base, said in a statement last week.

Those airlift missions, which some officials have also called "COVID Express," were flown

by C-40 Clippers of Commander Task Force 63, the Navy's logistics arm for Europe and Africa, based in Naples, Italy.

The flights also transported frozen samples for coronavirus testing from Djibouti to Rota, Spain, and on to Germany, officials said in a statement last month.

From March 30 through April 25, Navy Lt. Russell Parr led a cargo team that worked 14-hour days to clear the nearly 200 mail pallets through Djiboutian customs and loaded it onto waiting C-40s for delivery, said Jeff Criger, supply chain director at the logistics center in Sigonella, Sicily.

Criger's center worked with its counterpart in Bahrain on the "team effort ... to meet all the planning factors required to guarantee success for this massive undertaking," he said.

The "critical quality of life mission" was also assisted by the Air Force's air terminal team in Djibouti.

In Europe, the postal backlog has "pretty much been cleaned out," but packages and boxes were still cluttering up post offices, said Rear Adm. Yancy Lindsey, commander of Navy Region Europe, Africa and Central.

"Go to the post office and get



MARQUIS WHITEHEAD/U.S. Navy

**Petty Officer 2nd Class Stephen Williams, assigned to Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 58, prepares cargo spaces before loading mail bound for Europe aboard a C-40A aircraft at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, on April 22.**

your mail," Lindsey said in a town hall video meeting last week.

"They don't want to work around this stuff anymore."

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U.S. Army/AP

**Paratroopers assigned to Fort Bragg, N.C.'s 82nd Airborne Division return at Pope Army Airfield, on Friday.**

## Rapidly deployed paratroopers return home

Stars and Stripes

Almost 300 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division returned from the Middle East Friday, ending a rapid deployment meant to deter Iranian aggression in the region.

The returning soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team were greeted by dozens of loved ones who lined Pike Field on Fort Bragg, N.C., the division said in a statement on Saturday. Due to coronavirus precautions, a traditional welcome home was not possible, so the soldiers were to be greeted by the field in a sort of parade, officials said late last month.

More than 2,500 more paratroopers will return in the coming weeks, the division said, as the Immediate Response Force

Brigade ends the no-notice deployment that was ordered in late December, as Iran-backed Shiite militia members in Iraq stormed the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.

Soldiers will undergo 14-day quarantine, but those with families will be able to spend that period at home with their loved ones, with certain precautions in place, officials have said.

While deployed to the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, the troops trained individually and at the unit level, the statement said. They conducted airborne jumps, including the first expeditionary Jumpmaster qualification in CENTCOM, it said.

The deployed elements included mission command elements of the Division Tactical Command Post, the Immediate Response

Force Brigade, a multifunctional aviation task force called Task Force Saber, and others.

Task Force Saber supported recent air integration exercises at sea with the U.S. Navy. Army helicopters have trained in recent months to land on ships and attack seaborne targets in an effort to bolster maritime security in the Persian Gulf.

"The Brigade's deployment has been historic," said commander Col. Andrew Saslav. "Our Paratroopers deployed on no-notice to deter foreign aggression and were prepared to defeat the enemies of our Nation, and for almost five months we remained postured and ready to respond wherever needed."

news@stripes.com

## Death of 2 Spangdahlem airmen deemed accidental, drug-related

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
Stars and Stripes

**KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany** — Two young airmen who were found unresponsive in a dormitory room on Spangdahlem Air Base earlier this year had a toxic combination of drugs in their systems and died accidentally, the Air Force Office of Special Investigations said.

A preliminary investigation found that airmen first class Xavier-Malik Leapheart and Azizess Whitehurst, both 20, died from "multiple drug toxicity," Linda Card, a spokeswoman for the Quantico, Va.-based OSI, said in an email Wednesday following

a Stars and Stripes query.

Both deaths were ruled accidental, she said, citing information included in autopsies and death certificates.

Investigators are still determining how and where Leapheart and Whitehurst got the drugs that led to their deaths, and whether anyone else was involved, Card said.

Investigators have "no definitive timeline" for completing their work, which is continuing in spite of the coronavirus pandemic, she said.

"There are still many, many unanswered questions that have to be answered ... before this investigation can be closed," she

said.

Leapheart and Whitehurst were pronounced dead by emergency responders around 20 minutes after they were found in a dormitory room on the evening of Jan. 9.

Both were assigned to the 52nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron as armament system technicians, said Capt. Erin Recanzone, a base spokeswoman.

Wing commander Col. David Epperson said Friday that the loss of an airman "is always deeply felt" across the wing, "regardless of the cause of death."

"While we do not condone the decisions of these airmen that led to their deaths, their absence

here is still felt," Epperson said in a statement sent to Stars and Stripes. "My heart goes out to the friends and family members who I know are still feeling that loss as well."

Whitehurst was born in Garden City, Kan., and moved to Sierra Vista, Ariz., where he graduated high school in 2018. He left for Air Force basic training in December of that year, a post on his Twitter feed said.

Prior to joining the Air Force, he volunteered at a local church, played basketball and helped coach a city league team to a championship, his obituary said.

"Anyone who knows Azizess knows he is full of love and life,"

it said.

He is survived by his parents, Devin and Maria Whitehurst, and a large extended family.

Leapheart was from Lithonia, Ga., according to an online obituary.

"He was amazing, even when small," his school bus driver, Doreen Braswell, wrote on a memorial page. "He was part of so many great memories ..."

Leapheart joined the Air Force in November 2018, a month before Whitehurst. He is survived by his father, Malik Muhammad, and mother, Pamela Leapheart.

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## WAR ON TERRORISM

## US, Taliban spokesmen clash on Twitter over deal

By J.P. Lawrence

Stars and Stripes

KABUL, Afghanistan — The top U.S. military spokesman in Afghanistan and his counterpart in the Taliban traded words on Twitter in Saturday statements that appeared to reveal unwritten secret agreements between America and the militant group.

The U.S. military warned the Taliban that it must reduce attacks in line with an informal agreement to lower violence by 80% in a letter posted online by Col. Sonny Leggett.

"If the violence cannot be reduced — then yes, there will be responses," Leggett said in the letter, addressed to Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

Mujahid called the U.S. statement "pointless and provocative" in a response later in the day. U.S. officials have consistently said that continued violence against Afghan troops by the Taliban violates an agreement signed two months ago, despite such attacks not being expressly prohibited in the released text of the deal.

The deal says that if the Taliban stop attacking the U.S. and its allies, keep terrorists from operating in Afghanistan and hold intra-Afghan peace talks with the Kabul government, foreign forces will begin a phased withdrawal to



J.P. LAWRENCE/Stars and Stripes

**Zalmay Khalilzad, America's special envoy for Afghan reconciliation, and Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, the Taliban's top political leader, sign a peace deal in Doha, Qatar, on Feb. 29.**

leave the country in 14 months.

The deal also contains unwritten agreements, Leggett said on Twitter.

"During those long negotiations there were written and spoken commitments," Leggett wrote. "We spoke of ALL sides reduc-

ing violence by as much as 80% to pave the way for peace talks."

U.S. forces have begun drawing down from about 13,000 troops to

8,600 as part of the deal. But key parts of the agreement — prisoner exchanges and peace talks between the Taliban and Afghan government — are long behind schedule.

Demands for lower violence in the country come after attacks on Afghan forces surged above "seasonal norms" after the deal was signed, according to a report by the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction released Friday.

Meanwhile, the Taliban accused the U.S. of violating the deal by continuing to bomb its fighters.

In response, the letter by Leggett said that U.S. forces have not conducted any offensive strikes since the deal's signing, adding that operations to protect Afghan troops are allowed.

Saturday's exchange was a rare revelation of details in the U.S. and Taliban deal, said Andrew Watkins, a senior Afghanistan analyst at International Crisis Group, a nonprofit think tank based in Brussels.

"The fact the U.S. is bringing this out into the public now, two months later, suggests the U.S. may feel things aren't working," Watkins told Stars and Stripes on Sunday.

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## ISIS extremists step up as Iraq, Syria grapple with virus

Associated Press

BAGHDAD — The man wearing an explosive vest emerged from a car and calmly marched toward the gates of the intelligence building in Iraq's northern city of Kirkuk. When he ignored their shouts to halt, guards opened fire and he blew himself up, wounding three security personnel in the first week of Ramadan.

Days later, a three-pronged coordinated attack killed 10 Iraqi militia fighters in the northern province of Salahaddin — the deadliest and most complex operation in many months.

The assaults are the latest in a resurgence of attacks by Islamic State in northern Iraq. The first was a brazen suicide mission not seen in months. The second was among the most complex attacks since the group's defeat in 2017. In neighboring Syria, ISIS attacks on security forces, oil fields and civilian sites have also intensified.

The renewed mayhem is a sign that the militant group is taking advantage of governments absorbed in tackling the coronavirus pandemic and the ensuing slide into economic chaos. The virus is compounding long-time concerns among security and U.N. experts that the group would stage a comeback after its "caliphate," which once encompassed a third of Iraq and Syria, was brought down last year.

In Iraq, militants also exploited security gaps at a time of an ongoing territorial dispute and a U.S. troop drawdown.

"It's a real threat," said Qubad Talabani, deputy prime minister of the northern Kurdish region of Iraq. "They are mobilizing and killing us in the north, and they will start hitting Baghdad soon."

He said that ISIS was benefiting from a "gap" between Kurdish forces and federal armed forces caused by political infighting.

Intelligence reports said that the number of ISIS fighters in Iraq is believed to be 2,500-3,000.

In northeast Syria, Kurdish-dominated police have become a more visible target for ISIS as they patrol the streets to implement anti-virus measures, said Mervan Qamishli, a spokesman for U.S.-allied Kurdish-led forces.

ISIS fighters in late March launched a campaign of attacks in government-held parts of Syria, from the central province of Homs all the way to Deir el-Zour to the east, bordering Iraq.

Some 500 fighters, including some who had escaped from prison, recently slipped from Syria into Iraq, helping fuel the surge in violence there, Iraqi intelligence officials said.

ISIS is shifting from local intimidation to more complex attacks, three Iraqi military officials and experts said. Operations previously focused on assassina-

tions of local officials and less sophisticated attacks. The group is now carrying out more IED attacks, shootings and ambushes of police and military. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to talk to the media.

Multiple factors help the militants. The number of Iraqi military personnel on duty has dropped 50% because of virus prevention measures, the military officials said.

Also, territorial disputes between Baghdad and authorities from the northern Kurdish region have left parts of three provinces without law enforcement. The rugged landscape is difficult to police.

The uptick also coincides with a pullout of U.S.-led coalition forces from bases in western Iraq, Nineveh and Kirkuk provinces in line with a drawdown conceived in December.

"Before the emergence of the virus and before the American withdrawal, the operations were negligible, numbering only one operation per week," said a senior intelligence official. Now, he said, security forces are seeing an average of 20 operations a month. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media.

Coalition spokesman Col. Myles B. Caggins III said that ISIS attacks were increasing in reaction to operations against its hideouts

in the mountains and rural areas of north-central Iraq.

Iraqi military officials believe that the improved, organized nature of the attacks serves to cement the influence of new ISIS leader Abu Ibrahim al-Hashimi al-Quraishi, who was named after his predecessor was killed in a U.S. raid late last year. One military official said that more operations are expected during Ramadan to demonstrate the new leader's strength.

In Syria, one of the most significant attacks occurred April 9, when ISIS fighters attacked government positions in and near the town of Sukhna. The government brought in reinforcements for a counterattack backed by Russian airstrikes.

Two days of fighting left 32 troops and 26 ISIS gunmen dead, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which tracks the country's nine-year war.

Days later, the government said that because of the security situation in the desert, several gas wells in the fields of Shaer and Hayan were damaged, leading to a 30% drop in electricity production.

Back in Iraq, the green pastures of the northern village of Kujalo conceal a hidden enemy that keeps resident Nawzad up at night. His farming community lies in a disputed territory that has witnessed a sharp increase

in attacks, including a nearby ambush earlier this month that killed two peshmarga officers.

He said that the militants have local collaborators. "They know everything about each farm in Kujalo, and they know to whom each house belongs," he said, asking to be identified only by his first name, fearing reprisals.

The militants also receive shelter, supplies, food and transport from local sympathizers, said Kurdish Brig. Kamal Mahmoud. His forces are based on part of the front lines there, but can't operate in other parts run by government troops — and there, he said, the overstretched security forces control only main roads with no presence in villages.

On April 1, a federal police officer was killed, and a battalion commander and brigadier general wounded in a security operation in the Makhoul mountain range in Diyala. Two days later, an IED attack targeted a patrol of a commando regiment of the Diyala Operations Command in the outskirts of Maadan village.

Sartip, a Kujalo resident, said that he fears the militants' improved capabilities.

"[ISIS] has been carrying out attacks in Kurdish areas for a long time, but now they are more organized and have more people," he said.

## MILITARY

# Military flyover sends message of perseverance

By CARLOS BONGIOANNI  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Leaving white contrails streaked across a picture-perfect blue sky, powerful military jets with the Navy Blue Angels and Air Force Thunderbirds roared over the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area Saturday in a show of support for those on the front lines in the coronavirus war.

Similar flyovers have been scheduled over the next few weeks for numerous cities across the United States as a way for the military community to express

its thanks to health care workers, first responders and other essential personnel.

In a Defense Department press release, Chief of Staff of the Air Force Gen. David Goldfein and Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Michael Gilday were quoted as saying the aerial demonstrations were a way to show that "we are all in this together and that America's spirit will prevail."

The flyovers will incur no additional cost to taxpayers, according to the DOD release. Normally the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds perform in dozens of air shows over the course of a year.



JACQUELYN MARTIN/AP

The Ferry family from Chantilly, Va., who were in the middle of taking a family photograph, are surprised by a second fly over by the Blue Angels and Thunderbirds in Arlington, Va., on Saturday.

However, many of those shows have been canceled due to the coronavirus outbreak and subsequent lockdowns.

The pilots, however, must meet

a minimum number of flight hours required for their profession, so the flyovers allow them to maintain their proficiencies, while also giving a salute to those

risking their own lives while serving on the front lines of the coronavirus outbreak.

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## Fired: Pompeo believes shots were accidental; investigation in motion

### FROM FRONT PAGE

military will analyze the evidence including shells found at the scene.

"It was quite foggy and the North Korean soldiers usually rotate shifts around that time," the JCS officer was quoted as saying by the Yonhap News Agency.

He added that no other suspicious military activities had been detected on the North Korean side.

"We think those are accidental," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said on ABC's "This Week." "South Koreans did return fire. So far as we can tell, there was no loss of life on either side."

The DMZ, about 155 miles long and 2.5 miles wide, has often been a flashpoint in tensions between the rival nations, which remain technically at war since their 1950-53 conflict ended in an armistice instead of a peace treaty.

The United Nations Command said it was aware of the incident and was "cooperating closely" with the South Korean military to assess and monitor the situation.

"UNC will conduct a thorough investigation ... to determine if there was an Armistice Agreement violation, and will provide the report to the appropriate authorities once completed," spokesman Army Col. Lee Peters said in a statement.

The UNC initially said the investigation would begin Monday, but later said the date has yet to be confirmed.

The border is lined with barbed wire fences and filled with land

mines with tens of thousands of combat troops on both sides.

Sunday's shootings were the first in the DMZ since November 2017 when North Korean soldiers fired at a comrade as he fled across the border to defect to the South.

The two sides also neared the brink of conflict in 2015 when two South Korean soldiers were wounded after stepping on land mines that allegedly had been planted by North Korean forces.

The two Koreas agreed to disarm soldiers guarding a joint area and remove several guard posts and mines in a 2018 bid to ease tensions and eliminate the potential for misunderstandings.

The so-called comprehensive military agreement, which called for both sides to halt all hostile acts against each other, was reached during a high point of U.S.-led diplomacy aimed at persuading the North to abandon its nuclear weapons program.

Those talks stalled after Kim and President Donald Trump failed to reach an agreement during their third summit in February 2019.

"North Korea has in the past conducted calculated military provocations in the DMZ," Min-aro Oba, a former State Department official specializing in the Koreas, wrote on Twitter. "Unclear what exactly has happened/ is happening at the moment."

"The explanations for an incident like this in the DMZ could range from accident/miscalculation at a local level to a bigger tactical decision in North Korea

to heighten inter-Korean tensions to gain negotiating leverage," he added.

North Korea has been shrouded in mystery in recent weeks as Kim remained out of the public eye, leading to rampant speculation and unconfirmed reports that he was ill or possibly even dead.

The reports raised concern about instability should the third-generation leader, who assumed power after his father died of a heart attack in 2011, be incapacitated.

However, state-run media reported Saturday that Kim had attended the opening of a fertilizer factory near Pyongyang the day before to mark May Day.

Photos and video showed the 36-year-old leader strolling and smiling as thousands of North Koreans cheered. It was his first public appearance since April 11.

He was accompanied by officials including his sister, Kim Yo Jong, who is widely considered as a possible successor should something happen to her brother — who smokes, is overweight and has a family history of heart problems.

Trump, who has insisted that he and Kim maintain a good relationship despite the diplomatic deadlock, retweeted photos of Kim at the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

"I, for one, am glad to see he is back, and well!" Trump said in a tweet.

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## Italy IDs, cites second US airman involved in street racing incident

Stars and Stripes

AVIANO AIR BASE, Italy — Italian police have identified and cited a second U.S. airman involved in a street-racing incident after earlier citing another airman on drunk driving and other charges.

The second airman had eluded pursuit Wednesday night near the city of Fontanafredda but the vehicle was caught on camera, a Carabinieri officer involved in the case told Stars and Stripes on Friday.

The officer spoke on condition of anonymity as required by Carabinieri policy.

The first airman was cited and released at the scene after running three red lights and breaking the speed limit, the officer said. He was charged for DUI, speeding, running red lights and violating COVID-19 restrictions after admitting he had socialized at a friend's house before driving home, the officer said.

His driving licenses were revoked and he was driven home by a friend who came to pick him up.

The driver of the second vehicle was called into the Carabinieri office Thursday and initially denied involvement, the police officer said. He then admitted involvement after seeing the tape and was charged with speeding and running red lights.

Both airmen are members of the 31st Security Forces Squadron and neither have been identified.

In an email Friday, Maj. Sarah Babcock, a spokeswoman for the 31st Fighter Wing, said military authorities were still seeking details on the incident but the wing "takes violations of this nature seriously."

The U.S. military typically seeks jurisdiction in such cases from the host nation where the incident took place.

news@stripes.com

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## VIRUS OUTBREAK

# School year to stay digital for most of DODEA

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — All of the Defense Department's schools will close their doors for the remainder of the school year with the possible exception of those in South Korea, officials said Friday.

"In direct and close coordination with our senior military partners, the decision was made to keep school buildings closed to students for the remainder of the 2019-2020 school year and to maintain digital teaching and learning in all DODEA schools across the world," Department of Defense Education Activity Director Thomas Brady said in a letter to staff Friday.

In South Korea, where conditions have "improved considerably," schools could reopen "in the coming weeks" while DODEA and U.S. Forces Korea assess the coronavirus risk, Brady said.

DODEA schools in South Korea closed Feb. 26 because of the virus outbreak. Schools in Japan, including Okinawa, shut their doors on March 23, after a surge in coronavirus cases there.

The agency's 162 schools overseas and in the U.S. will continue the online program put in place to ensure the continuity of education, Brady said.

In a separate announcement Friday, DODEA-Europe cited safety concerns and the short amount of time left in the school year as reasons for closing their

schools.

"We know that this decision is disappointing to our staff, students and families alike," DODEA-Europe spokesman Stephen Smith said in a statement.

"While some host nations are making decisions to slowly open up aspects of their economies, given the relatively short amount of time remaining in the current school year, DODEA and military leadership agree that this was the prudent decision for our schools."

"The health and safety of our staff, students and communities is our highest priority."

The Pentagon operates 66 schools across Europe.

DODEA schools in Italy closed Feb. 24, followed by Bahrain two days later. DODEA shuttered its schools in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Turkey and Spain on March 16. Those in the United Kingdom closed later that month.

The DODEA decision Friday came as some countries in Europe look to slowly reopen their schools, crediting social distancing and lockdown measures for reducing the virus's spread.

Germany plans to reopen classes in stages for all grades by the summer holidays, with measures being considered on how to safely start up lessons again, such as employing smaller learning groups or a rotating schedule for different student grades.

Germany's federal states stagger their summer holidays, with the earliest beginning in the mid-



JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

**Samantha Sanchez observes second graders in her Spanish class last year at Vogelweh Elementary School near Kaiserslautern, Germany. All DODEA schools will close their doors for the rest of the school year with the possible exception of schools in South Korea, officials said Friday.**

dle of June and the latest ending in mid-September.

DODEA-Europe's school year is scheduled to end June 9 as originally planned, Smith said.

Graded instruction, however, may end sooner and that could vary between schools and even individual classes, Smith said.

No new assignments or assessments will be administered the last two weeks of school, DODEA said in an April 24 memo.

The time will be set aside for

students to finish all work, and for reinforcement and enrichment activities, according to the policy, aimed at helping those struggling with home studies and other difficulties, the agency said.

Students will also receive the higher grade from the last two quarters of the school year for their semester grade.

But pupils still need to make an effort to complete their assignments, officials said Friday.

"We have had some students

inquire if the policy means that they could 'opt out' of Quarter 4 and just take their Quarter 3 grades for their semester grade," Ramstein High School Principal Sharon O'Donnell said in an email to parents. "The answer is no. There is no 'opt out' in the policy."

Stars and Stripes reporter Kim Gabel contributed to this report.  
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## Bases in Germany follow country's lead on easing of virus restrictions

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
AND MARCUS KLOECKNER  
Stars and Stripes

KAISERSLAUTERN, Germany — Some base barbershops are reopening and venues such as playgrounds, museums, zoos and houses of worship in Germany are allowed to do so if they follow safety rules, as a result of eased coronavirus restrictions after weeks of lockdown.

Social distancing rules are still in place for now, as are bans on large public events, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Thursday after a meeting with leaders from Germany's 16 federal states.

She urged Germans to remain disciplined as they return to normal life and warned that if new infections spiked, the federal and state governments must be prepared to react.

"Caution remains the order of the day," Merkel said.

U.S. military bases across Germany were still reviewing what services and facilities to resume and reopen, following Germany's lead.

Rules for lifting restrictions are expected to vary by state and locality.

Hairdressers nationwide are allowed to open again Monday,

and some U.S. bases in Germany plan to open their barbershops and beauty salons again after weeks of closure, though with strict measures in place.

At Ramstein Air Base and Kapaun, the barbershops will see customers by appointment only, with military personnel given priority for bookings, base officials said. Employees must wash customers' hair, raising prices to 17.25 euros, or \$19. Customers and stylists are required to wear face masks, and customers will be spaced to sit in every other barber chair to maintain social distancing rules.

At Spangdahlem Air Base, barbershop openings are on hold, a base spokesman said. More base food services, however, were expected to open for takeout orders again, the spokesman said.

In Rheinland-Pfalz, the state that includes Ramstein and about 50,000 Defense Department personnel and their families, houses of worship were allowed to open Sunday, Minister President Malu Dreyer said. Playgrounds were allowed to open Sunday where local communities agreed, she said, while museums would be open by May 11.

U.S. Army Garrison Stuttgart officials said they were discuss-

ing with U.S. Army Europe what services can be reopened. Army officials in Wiesbaden, home to USAREUR, declined to comment Friday and said any announcements would be discussed in an online Facebook meeting.

In Bavaria, where German health officials said 1,850 people as of Friday had died from coronavirus-related illnesses, more than any other German state, Minister President Markus Söder said further discussions were necessary before restrictions are eased.

The Army garrison in Bavaria has generally matched the state's regulations, but did loosen one restriction: people living on post are now allowed to travel off base in limited circumstances, if a single-use pass is approved by an O-5 equivalent supervisor or higher. The garrison, home to about 40,800 U.S. personnel, restricted on-base residents to post in March.

Vehicles leaving post will be randomly screened to enforce the new rule and to check that safety procedures are being followed, officials said.

Germany in recent weeks began easing restrictions after seeing the infection rate drop. It rose for a few days afterward but has since dropped again. Small



DAVID EDGE/Stars and Stripes

**The military police close the playgrounds at Wiesbaden's Crestview and Aukamm housing areas because of coronavirus concerns.**

stores, such as bicycle shops and booksellers, were allowed to open beginning April 20 and German schools will reopen on a limited basis starting Monday, with emphasis on graduating classes and the oldest primary school children.

Germany's social distancing rules will remain in place until at least May 10. Those include a ban on gatherings of more than two people in public who are not part of the same household, and keeping at least 1.5 meters, or about 5 feet, apart from others in public places.

The goal is to slow down the spread of the virus, "since there are neither medications nor a vaccine," Merkel said.

Whether and when to begin reopening hotels, restaurants and other tourist services is expect-

ed to be discussed when Merkel meets again with the heads of the states in the coming weeks.

The hospitality industry has struggled during the pandemic, with restaurants closed for all but limited delivery and takeout since late March.

Mario Ludwig, the owner of Der Fleischerbiss, a sausage snack bar about a 15-minute drive north of Kaiserslautern, said customer numbers have fallen off by 50% despite maintaining takeout services.

"I built this place up and now I don't know if it can go on," Ludwig said. "It's a really hard time."

Stars and Stripes reporters Immanuel Johnson, John Vandiver, Karin Zeitvogel and David Edge contributed to this report.  
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## VIRUS OUTBREAK

# Military helped ease workload at NY hospital

By JADA YUAN  
The Washington Post

NEW YORK — The days upon ruthless days of battling COVID-19 are such a blur that Joseph Lieber can't remember the exact date the military showed up at his hospital offering to help.

Lieber, director of medicine at Elmhurst Hospital Center, a public medical facility in western Queens that was among the city's hardest hit, said he maybe got a phone call on a Saturday night that the Army wanted to send over a team — because he remembers he was working. Actually, he has worked every day for the past two months. He also hasn't seen his three grandchildren, who live near him, since the city lockdown.

"You see, that was during our peak, peak, peak, peak," he said. "We were in a bad way, let me tell you." At one point, he described the situation — illness and daily death tolls beyond anything he'd seen working through every New York crisis in 36 years on the job — as "Dante's Inferno."

"I'm not going to lie to you," he said. "This really feels like it's the 11th plague."

What few others know, though, is that the overwhelming of the hospital system came not just from incoming sick people, equipment shortages and deaths, but from what Lieber calls "an output problem." That is, the bureaucratic entanglements of transferring or discharging recovering COVID-19 patients, particularly the homeless, the mentally ill or undocumented day laborers living close to a room, heading back into the situations that made them vulnerable.

Even as this city seems to have escaped the gravest predictions, fear and uncertainty remain.

There is a severe lack of testing to ensure people will be safe once more if the economy reopens. If a second wave of infection hits and no lessons have been learned about the imperative of getting less-sick patients out of hospitals and into other types of care, Lieber predicts, the overload could prove deadly again.

That's where the military was supposed to come in.

The USNS Comfort, the Navy hospital ship that arrived in Manhattan with great fanfare on March 30 departed Thursday, having treated 182 patients and run several rescue missions during its stay. A day later, a military field hospital here, built inside the Javits convention center, discharged the last of eight remaining patients, from a peak of 453 in mid-April. In all, about 1,100 people were treated there.

The 680 military medical personnel remaining in the city will embed or stay embedded in local and state hospitals to help alleviate gaps in staffing — and to provide psychiatric care for health workers. Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, has asked for a hold on dismantling Javits in case it is needed for a resurgence of cases.

Of the city's 42,400 hospitalizations, the military handled 3%.

However those numbers look compared to expectations, for doctors on the ground like Lieber, the mission was a success.

Elmhurst is relatively small for being the only Level 1 trauma center in its area, with 550 beds to serve a catchment area of 1.7 million people in the largest and second-most populous borough in the city — and the most diverse county in the country.

At the peak, Lieber said, they had twice as many patients as beds and had to admit 100 patients into the emergency room



PHOTOS BY CELESTE SLOMAN/The Washington Post

Joseph Lieber, director of medicine at Elmhurst Hospital Center in Queens, N.Y., says the coronavirus crisis has been unlike anything he's seen in decades as a doctor.

because the intensive care unit was too full to take them, even after Lieber's staff turned four other areas of the hospital into ICUs. In a bad flu season, for example, 35 people might get admitted to the ER.

In the end, Javits took 56 of those patients and the Comfort took 12, small numbers on paper, but they led to a morale boost for the staff, Lieber said, because for the first time they could feel breathing room and an end in sight.

"It was exciting," said Lauren Clifford, social work supervisor and a discharge planner at Elmhurst, "because every time someone is stable enough to leave, that opens up the bed for someone who will die if they're not in the hospital."

The Army, Navy, and Air Force sent over nurses, doctors and pharmacists to fill in for the many members of Elmhurst's staff who were out sick.

"They helped us tremendously," he said. "For us, Javits was a rescue."

Lt. Col. Guy Travis Clifton re-

members the exact moment he stepped into Elmhurst. It was the morning of April 6. "And it was so jarring," he said, "They were so overwhelmed. It reminded me of a scene from a mass casualty in Afghanistan. There were just patients everywhere. You couldn't take more patients in there if you wanted to. It was really disturbing, actually, and they were doing a heroic job."

Clifton had been deployed three times to Afghanistan. Now chief of general surgery at Brooke Army Medical Center, he'd left his wife and three young sons in San Antonio and was on site as Javits and the Comfort came under fire from New York hospital directors frustrated about how few patients either field hospital was taking on.

They'd at first tried to screen only for patients without COVID-19. But those patients never came. Javits had only 11 admitted over the course of a week before Cuomo asked for it to become a facility for COVID-19 patients only.

The main problem seemed to

be with an incredibly rigid set of 49 criteria the military had devised for admitting the right type of patient for these two facilities.

Even once they started accepting COVID-19 patients, Javits and the Comfort still used a modified version of that list of 49 criteria. Patients were still coming in at a trickle.

"I was very skeptical of how tight the criteria were," Lieber said. Finding people whose condition met all 49 requirements was near impossible.

That's when the military command decided the system wasn't working and, instead of waiting on the hospitals, the Army needed to go to them.

Clifton and his team approached that first visit to Elmhurst almost like a pitch meeting — explaining what Javits could do for them.

Likewise, Lieber said, it was good for the military to see how bad things were — in person: "I think that made them realize, 'We've got to start moving faster and maybe the criteria can be cut.'"

The hospital gave Clifton access to medical records, and they quickly figured out they had to streamline the patient transfer process.

That first day he moved 19 patients. Some days he'd move 25.

He also threw out most of that criteria list. "You can almost simplify it down to: They can't have other active medical problems that are life-threatening," he said — like a heart attack.

"I feel like we did a good thing," he said. "Was it perfect? Probably not. But on a whole, I think we helped and it felt meaningful."

The Elmhurst ER is back to normal capacity. The crisis phase is over, but COVID-19 treatment isn't and Lieber still wakes up for work most days at 3 a.m.



Elmhurst Hospital Center was among the New York's hardest hit medical facilities.



The Javits convention center in Manhattan was converted to a military field hospital for COVID-19 patients.

## VIRUS OUTBREAK

# Many lockdowns ease, but others still struggling

Associated Press

**ROME** — From the United States to Europe to Asia, the easing of some coronavirus lockdowns brought millions out of their homes to enjoy the outdoors. Yet the global pandemic is still slicing through other nations, causing infections and deaths to march relentlessly higher.

On Sunday, India reported more than 2,600 infections, its biggest single-day jump, and new cases in Russia exceed 10,000 for the first time. The confirmed virus death toll in Britain was creeping up near that of Italy, the epicenter of Europe's outbreak, even though the U.K. population is younger than Italy's and Britain had more time than Italy to prepare before the pandemic hit.

There was also worrying news from Afghanistan, where nearly a third tested positive in a random test of 500 people in Kabul, the capital city.

Health experts have warned that a second wave of infections could hit unless testing is expanded dramatically after lockdowns are eased. But there are



RAJANISH KARANDE/AP

**An Indian Air Force helicopter showers flower petals on the staff of INS Asvini hospital in Mumbai, India, on Sunday.**

enormous pressures to reopen economies, since the weeklong shutdown of businesses around the world has plunged the global economy into its deepest slump since the 1930s and has wiped out millions of jobs.

China, which reported only two new cases, is seeing a surge in visitors to newly reopened tourist spots after domestic travel restrictions were relaxed ahead of a five-day holiday that runs through Tuesday.

Nearly 1.7 million people visited Beijing parks on the first two days of the holiday, and Shanghai's main tourist spots welcomed more than 1 million visitors, according to Chinese media. Many spots limited daily visitors to 30%

of capacity.

Italians are counting down the hours until Monday, when parks and public gardens were reopening nationwide for strolling, jogging or bike riding. But with sunshine and warm temperatures across the country, many were outside in force Sunday, walking down streets and chatting on sidewalks.

Despite the easing, Italians will still have to stay a meter apart, picnics are not allowed and playgrounds will remain closed. Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has warned that if the rate of contagion starts rising again, such freedoms will be curtailed.

In Spain, many ventured out this weekend for the first time since the country's lockdown began March 14, but social distancing rules were still in place. Masks are mandatory starting Monday on public transit.

"There is a high probability that we will see new outbreaks," said Spanish health expert Fernando Simon. "That is what we must be prepared for and keep in mind over the following months."

## McConnell, Pelosi decline offer of rapid testing

By COLBY ITRWITZ  
AND MIKE DeBONIS

The Washington Post

**WASHINGTON** — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi issued a rare letter jointly rejecting the Trump administration's offer to supply Capitol Hill with 1,000 rapid-result coronavirus tests, asking that they be prioritized for front-line workers.

The decision by the leaders Saturday to turn down the Trump administration's offer came as the United States neared 66,000 coronavirus-related deaths and at least a dozen states had their

first weekend of loosened coronavirus-related restrictions.

The Capitol's attending physician, Brian Monahan, had told Senate staffers Thursday that limited testing capacity meant only lawmakers and staff with symptoms could get tested, and that they would need to wait several days for results.

The Senate is set to return to Washington on Monday to a city still on lockdown amid growing death rates. McConnell's decision to call senators back to Washington while the District of Columbia is effectively shut down has been controversial. Pelosi has refused

to do the same.

The tests offered by the Trump administration could have allowed lawmakers and some staff to preemptively check for the coronavirus and know the results within minutes.

"There is tremendous Coronavirus testing capacity in Washington for the Senators returning to Capital (sic) Hill on Monday. Likewise the House, which should return but isn't because of Crazy Nancy P.," President Donald Trump tweeted Saturday morning. "The 5 minute Abbott Test will be used."

But McConnell and Pelosi

agreed that the tests should be reserved for those who needed them most.

"Congress is grateful for the Administration's generous offer to deploy rapid COVID-19 testing capabilities to Capitol Hill, but we respectfully decline the offer at this time," they wrote. "Our country's testing capacities are continuing to scale up nationwide, and Congress wants to keep directing resources to the front-line facilities where they can do the most good the most quickly."

They added that Monahan would use the older testing until "these speedier technologies be-

come more widely available."

A senior Democratic aide on Capitol Hill said that no request for rat tests was made by leaders of either chamber or by Monahan. They learned about the administration's offer like the rest of the world: by tweet.

"No one asked for this," said the aide, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to talk frankly.

The tweet came from Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, who on late Friday first shared plans to send Congress three rapid-results machines with the ability to conduct 1,000 tests.

## Minimum: Many states lack resources to meet 2% testing threshold

FROM FRONT PAGE

document made clear that states are responsible for testing, saying that the federal government is the "supplier of last resort."

The closest the White House has come to issuing a benchmark does not appear in the document. At a recent briefing, senior administration officials said that the government would provide each state with enough tests, swabs and related materials to screen at least 2.6% of their populations in May and June. Those hit harder by the outbreak would be eligible for additional assistance.

It was unclear how the 2.6% figure was reached. When asked about it, officials with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services described it as 2% of state populations per month without explaining the discrepancy.

Officials also did not respond to questions about whether the administration has a target for how many daily tests should be done nationwide or when it would issue more details.

Only about 40% of states currently meet even the 2% testing threshold, according to AP's analysis. The percentage is expected to rise as states increase their testing capabilities. The AP based the monthly testing rate for each state on the average number of new daily tests over the most recent seven days. The data is from the COVID Tracking Project and includes counts up to April 30.

A White House spokesman said Friday that the administration's testing threshold is only a suggestion and that states are ultimately responsible for deciding how to

reopen in a "safe and responsible manner." The administration said that it is working to expand testing and has been highlighting plans first announced in March for additional testing sites at retail pharmacy chains.

States that do not meet the administration's testing guidance, based on their current screening rates, include some that have been moving into the early stages of reopening, such as Colorado, South Carolina and Texas. Georgia, which has moved aggressively to ease restrictions and lift its stay-at-home order, is just under the 2% threshold.

Louisiana and Kansas, where Republican lawmakers have been putting pressure on Democratic governors to reopen, are falling short, according to the AP analysis. In Kansas, the governor and

top health administrator expect to reach the 2% mark this month.

Florida, which announced that its first phase of reopening will start this week, also falls short but has said that it will be able to test 30,000 to 40,000 people a day if needed. Michigan, where the Republican-led legislature has sued the Democratic governor over the state's stay-at-home order, is on track to test 2.2% of its population.

Former health officials and experts were critical of the testing blueprint, and said that the 2.6% or 2% population metric was too vague and didn't take into account guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control on who should be tested.

"Why don't they say, 'We'll test everybody with any symptoms of coronavirus and all their con-

tacts'?" said Dr. James Curran, a former assistant U.S. surgeon general who worked at CDC for 25 years. "If that amounts to 2% that's fine, but the guidelines are not to test 2%. The guidelines are to test who needs it."

Many experts already said that the national testing rate falls short of what is needed to safely ease social distancing guidelines.

Researchers at Harvard have calculated that the U.S. needs to be testing roughly 500,000 people per day before considering easing restrictions this month. That's a nearly 150% increase from the recent daily tally of approximately 200,000 tests.

"I've described it and I still describe it as an absolute bare minimum," said Ashish Jha, director of the Harvard Global Health Institute.



## VIRUS OUTBREAK

## Court OKs ban on religious gatherings

By BRUCE SCHREINER  
Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A federal appeals court Saturday declined to block the Kentucky governor's temporary ban on massing gatherings from applying to in-person religious services.

The three-judge panel did clear the way for Maryville Baptist Church to hold drive-in worship services while adhering to public health requirements. That's an alternative that Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear has strongly encouraged throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

But the panel stopped short of applying its order to in-person worship services.

The ruling came soon after the church asked the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for an emergency order stopping Beshear's

mass gathering ban from being enforced against religious services.

"We realize that this falls short of everything the church has asked for and much of what it wants," the Cincinnati-based appeals court panel said Saturday. "But that is all we are comfortable doing after the 24 hours the plaintiffs have given us with this case."

It urged a federal district judge to "prioritize resolution" of the church's claims in its lawsuit.

Beshear recently announced that places of worship in Kentucky will be able to once again hold in-person services starting May 20. It's part of a broader plan to gradually reopen the state's economy.

In Saturday's opinion, the judges took note of those "secular exceptions."

"The breadth of the ban on religious ser-

vices, together with a haven for numerous secular exceptions, should give pause to anyone who prizes religious freedom," the panel wrote, before concluding "it's not always easy to decide what is Caesar's and what is God's — and that's assuredly true in the context of a pandemic."

The ruling supports what Beshear has said all along, according to his spokeswoman, Crystal Staley.

"The governor has allowed and even encouraged hundreds of drive-in services across Kentucky," she said in a statement Saturday. "What the Sixth Circuit decided is that drive-in services are okay, but the governor's order prohibiting in-person services remains in effect. That has been the governor's exact policy since the beginning."



RYAN C. HERMERS, LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER/AP

**Jack Roberts, pastor of Maryville Baptist Church which has continued holding in-person church services during the COVID-19 pandemic, speaks during the Kentucky Freedom Rally at the state Capitol in Frankfort, Ky., on Saturday.**

## Trump replaces HHS watchdog who reported shortages at hospitals

By LISA REIN  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump moved to replace the top watchdog at the Department of Health and Human Services after her office released a report on the shortages in testing and personal protective gear at hospitals during the coronavirus pandemic.

In a Friday night announcement, the White House nominated a permanent inspector general to take the reins from Christi Grimm, the principal deputy inspector general who has run the office since January.

The White House nominated Jason Weida, an assistant United States attorney in Boston, as permanent inspector general. The announcement said Weida was

chosen because he has overseen "numerous complex investigations in health care and other sectors." He must be confirmed by the Senate.

Trump laced into Grimm at a news conference in April, after her staff report found "severe shortages" of testing kits, delays in getting coronavirus results and "widespread shortages" of masks and other equipment at

U.S. hospitals.

The president demanded to know who wrote the report, calling the findings "wrong." He then accused reporters of having withheld that Grimm had worked in the Obama administration.

"Where did he come from, the inspector general? What's his name? No, what's his name? What's his name?" Trump responded on April 6, when asked

about the report, which he said was politically biased. He then attacked Grimm on Twitter, writing, "Why didn't the I.G., who spent 8 years with the Obama Administration (Did she Report on the failed H1N1 Swine Flu debacle where 17,000 people died?), want to talk to the Admirals, Generals, V.P. & others in charge, before doing her report?"

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## VIRUS OUTBREAK

# 'I died and came back'

A 12-year-old girl overcomes a near-death experience against the deadly coronavirus

By STACEY PLAISANCE  
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS — As her desperately sick daughter was being airlifted to a hospital, Jennifer Daly was thinking about all the parts of life that still lay ahead for her 12-year-old and whether she'd ever experience them: Would she get to fall in love? Would she get the chance to get married and have her own children?

Driving across the causeway that separates the family's home north of Lake Pontchartrain from the New Orleans hospital where their daughter was taken — with what was later determined to be a coronavirus infection — she was forced to imagine a life without her Juliet.

"She's the sweetest girl. She's the sweetest girl in the whole world. And she does not deserve this. And I was praying to God ... just please, please help, please help me," said Jennifer, speaking from the family's Covington home Thursday, with her husband Sean and their now-recovered daughter.

As Juliet and her 5-year-old brother spar with each other using pool noodles, it's hard to imagine that just earlier last month Juliet was fighting for her life. At one point she had a heart attack and doctors had to perform CPR for two minutes before she came back.

"I died and came back," Juliet said.

Her coronavirus journey didn't

start with many of the symptoms that have affected adults — breathing problems, for example. She had stomach pain and vomiting, and her mother, who's a radiologist, thought maybe it was appendicitis or some type of stomach problem. But Juliet's lips were also turning blue and her limbs were cold.

Juliet quickly ended up in the emergency room of the local hospital. There, she had a heart attack, underwent CPR, and was eventually airlifted to Ochsner Medical Center. Dr. Jake Kleinmahon was one of the doctors who was there to meet her and care for her over the next 10 days.

"Juliet came in as one of the sickest children we've taken care of with COVID-19," said Kleinmahon. The top chamber of her heart was not working correctly with the bottom chamber, and she was developing "multisystem organ failure," he said.

Kleinmahon said children with coronavirus infections often have different symptoms than adults, such as the abdominal problems Juliet had, or rashes in other cases. He said, or many children also have another virus besides the coronavirus and that was the case with Juliet.

Juliet was on a ventilator for four days, during which she was sedated and then was eventually able to breathe on her own. She was discharged April 15. The doctor said her heart function is now completely normal. Although she likely has a little trauma to her



GERALD HERBERT/AP

Juliet Daly, 12, sits with her father, Sean Daly, and mother, Jennifer Daly, on their front porch, as Jennifer recounts the ordeal of almost losing Juliet to the coronavirus, in Covington, La..

heart that should decrease over time, he expects she'll have a "totally normal life."

When she regained consciousness, her parents said she immediately worried about missing school. Her mother said that when she told Juliet what had happened, her eyes got as big as saucers.

"At first I was freaking out a lot," Juliet said. And then she was

worried about whether there were any lasting effects to her body.

Juliet said she and her husband hadn't known anyone who'd even been infected with coronavirus until their daughter became so drastically ill. If they hadn't gotten her to the hospital in time, they don't know if she'd be alive today. She's glad Juliet doesn't remember those four days on a ven-

tilator — days Jennifer will never forget.

"All she remembers is daddy telling her she's going to go to sleep. 'They're going to put a tube down your throat. You're gonna go on a helicopter ride. You're gonna wake up in a new hospital and mommy will be there' said Jennifer. "Well, that's what happened."

## Comic book industry battles against villainous virus

By JAKE COYLE  
Associated Press

The pandemic has transformed Christina Blanch, owner of Aw Yeah Comics, into a nightly TV host.

Nine times a week, Blanch leads a livestream from the store she lives above in Muncie, Ind., to sell some comics and interact with regulars. She holds up issues one by one, usually for \$5 or \$10, and takes down addresses from buyers. It's a way to get by but helps keep the shop's community spirit alive. The show has a warm, thank-God-we-have-each-other feel to it. Sometimes Blanch sips a Modelo or vents about a difficult day. She calls it "What We Do in the Comic Shop."

Long a repository for tales of world-threatening cataclysms and doomsday dystopias, the comic shop in the coronavirus era now finds itself drawn into a fight for its very survival. The crisis, felt across retailers, poses a particular threat to comic book shops, a pop-culture institution that has, through luck and passion, held out through digital upheaval while remaining stubbornly resistant to corporate ownership.

Even as the pandemic era takes on the appearance of a comic — desolate urban centers, masks everywhere — the ink-and-paper industry is at a standstill that some believe jeopardizes its future, casting doubt on how many shops will make it through and what might befall the gathering places of proud nerds, geeks and read-



BEN MARGOT/AP

Joe Field, owner of Flying Color Comics, prepares to put on his mask to make a curbside delivery of comic books at his shop in Concord, Calif., last week.

ers everywhere.

It won't go — insert "POW!" bubble — without a fight.

"I've put so much into this shop. I'm going to go down swinging if I'm going to go down," says Blanch, who also writes comic books and graphic novels. "This place is important to people. What are you going to do but keep going?"

Saturday would have been Free Comic

Book Day, an annual nationwide event intended to bring die-hards and newbies alike into stores. Instead, stores are closed nationwide and new print issues haven't been released since late March, when the industry's primary distributor, Diamond Comic Distributors, shut down.

Normally, some 6 million extra comics are distributed for the day and around 1.2 million people flock to stores. For some

shops, it dwarfs even Comic-Con, the annual San Diego convention (also canceled). Joe Field, owner of Flying Color Comics in Concord, Calif., who came up with the holiday, calls it "the single biggest retail day in the comic book industry."

The stoppage, says Dan Gearino, author of "Comic Shop: The Retail Mavericks Who Gave us a New Geek Culture," comes as the industry — despite being a pipeline to massive billion-dollar blockbusters — isn't in great financial health.

"We're going to come out of this with fewer comic shops, but there will be enough that survive that this industry will continue," Gearino says. "The question I'm asking is: How big will the culling be?"

At Flying Colors Comics, Field has been offering biweekly curbside pick-ups. He's used to crowds every Wednesday when new comics come out — a shared experience for fans prowling racks to see latest issues. But even once shops reopen, the bustle of signings and other events will be curtailed by distancing protocols in the typically cramped aisles of comic stores.

Field, though, is certain the comic shop will abide.

"Comic book retailers are the cockroaches of pop culture," Field says. "We have been through all kinds of things that were meant to put us out of business, whether it's the new digital world or distribution upheaval or Disney buying Marvel. We have adapted and pivoted and remade our businesses in ways that are unique and survivable."

## VIRUS OUTBREAK

## Suburbs prove just as vulnerable as cities

By DAVID PORTER  
Associated Press

**NEW YORK** — Haunting images of an empty Times Square and the daily accounting of hundreds of fatalities in New York City have reinforced the idea of the coronavirus as an urban contagion.

That may obscure an equally sobering truth: Many of the city's suburbs have been hit just as hard. In some, there have been more fatalities per capita than in super-dense Manhattan.

The virus's rampage through the New York metro region, from the well-to-do towns along Connecticut's coastline to the bedroom communities of northern New Jersey and Long Island, offers a counterweight to the notion of the suburbs, with their plentiful open spaces, as safe havens.

"You expect to see it spread more rapidly in densely populated areas like cities, but it does that anywhere the virus is introduced and where people are in contact with other people," said Dr. Stephen Morse, professor of epidemiology at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health in New York. "All it needs is fertile soil because it spreads quite well, unfortunately."

The first sustained outbreak to be detected in the New York metropolitan area occurred in the suburb of New Rochelle, where an attorney who had attended large gatherings at a local synagogue was the first to test positive. Another cluster sprang up 5 miles west of the city in Teaneck, N.J. The first New Jersey resident to die, 69-year-old horse racing veteran John Brennan, lived in northern New Jersey and worked at a racetrack in Yonkers, a New York suburb.

According to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University, Rockland county, N.Y., has reported roughly 3,500 positive cases per 100,000 residents, nearly triple the rate in Manhattan and more than double the rate in Brooklyn. Westchester County, which in-



MARK LENNHAN/AP

**Passengers wearing face masks to help curb the spread of coronavirus leave the Staten Island Ferry in New York. An Associated Press study of COVID-19 cases by zip code in New York City has found more cases per capita in Staten Island, the least congested of the five boroughs than in some of the more densely populated areas of Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens.**

cludes New Rochelle, has a rate of nearly 2,900 cases per 100,000 residents.

If the five New Jersey counties closest to New York were a country, they would have recorded the 12th most cases in the world, more than 59,000 through Tuesday.

At Hudson Regional Hospital in Secaucus, N.J., just west of Manhattan, the volume of patients had quadrupled by early April, forcing the emergency room to divert patients several times, hospital CEO Dr. Nizar Kifaieh said, though the numbers have decreased recently.

Dr. Tanaya Bhowmick, an infectious disease physician and assistant professor at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in

New Jersey, said her patients who have underlying immune issues have been taking precautions. But she recently saw a group of youths playing basketball in her suburban neighborhood.

"There might be the perception that they're a little more safe here, which obviously isn't true," she said.

Tracking the virus's path can yield some surprises. The first several people to test positive for the coronavirus in Connecticut actually had a strain that was linked to the outbreak in Washington state, said Nathan Grubaugh, an assistant professor of epidemiology at the Yale School of Public Health. He is leading a study with other researchers that

is using genomic testing to chart the spread of the virus across the U.S. and into Connecticut.

After those first cases, data showed Connecticut residents were testing positive for a virus similar to the strains in New York, which have been linked to those in Europe, Grubaugh said.

It wasn't surprising to Stamford Mayor David Martin that his city of about 130,000 people would be one of the hardest hit in the state.

Downtown Stamford is less than 10 miles from the New York state line and less than an hour from Manhattan by train. Nearly 1,800 Stamford residents have tested positive for the coronavirus, by far the highest total among the state's 169 cities and towns.

"The reality is that ... in normal times we have 30,000 people get on or get off the train at the Stamford train station and a big chunk of those people are traveling to or from New York City," Martin said. "With a wide diversity of socioeconomic status that are basically right here next to the New York epicenter, it has been a struggle for us."

Commuting patterns can partly explain the virus's spread in the New York region. Subway ridership in the city tops 5 million on an average weekday, and according to a recent study by the city's planning commission, about 1 million people travel into New York each day from the surrounding counties — and a quarter-million go in the opposite direction — many on public transportation that is routinely overcrowded.

The picture is more complicated, though. An Associated Press study of COVID-19 cases by zip code in New York City has found, for example, more cases per capita in Staten Island, the least congested of the five boroughs and the one not served by the city's subway system, than in some of the more densely populated areas of Manhattan, Brooklyn and Queens.

Bergen County Executive James Tedesco, whose county has the highest number of cases in New Jersey, said officials were initially able to track the virus's spread along the most heavily used buses and train lines. As other outbreaks followed, he has waged an ongoing campaign, mostly successful, to stress the importance of social distancing to the county's approximately 932,000 residents.

"Some people have a behavior that says, 'I don't care'; that's the small minority still, and I'm happy about that," Tedesco said. "I get it, it's not easy. But I have lost an uncle, my cousin lost her father and her husband in the last three weeks, and a friend of mine lost his wife. This isn't the flu."

## From a loft studio on a farm, professor teaches painting

Associated Press

Fred Haag, an associate professor of visual arts at Penn State York, normally teaches his Art 50: Introduction to Painting course in a large studio at a state-of-the-art performing arts center. But because of the COVID-19 outbreak, classes are now being held remotely from a loft studio at his small farm in south-central Pennsylvania.

The farm is in a hilly, agrarian area in Hellam, about 11 miles from campus. Haag lives there with his wife of almost 30 years, Marcy Nicholas, who also teaches at Penn State York. They currently raise just cats and chickens, but the old farm has hosted cattle, goats and ducks.

The spring class of 20 un-

dergraduate students has been meeting remotely three days a week since March 16, when the whole Penn State system moved to remote and online classes in response to the global pandemic. On a rainy Friday morning, the class began on Zoom with an artist presentation, with Haag later checking in on students' progress on their projects — and a growing roster outside the window making an occasional interruption.

For Haag, who's been teaching for more than three decades, this is his first experience with remote instruction. He's encountered a few growing pains with technology and streaming video. "Our area has limited Wi-Fi, and visual courses consume lots of bandwidth," said Haag, 58. The

university has provided him with a smartphone to act as an internet hotspot.

"There is a significant learning curve for both faculty and students," he added. "This term is really an emergency stopgap measure. And to do things correctly, I would want a lot more time to assemble materials and work out the details of class-time activities."

Haag said he thinks remote painting classes could continue after the pandemic, but he has some reservations. "There are a bunch of folks who teach art courses remotely," he said. "But I find myself missing the studio dynamic and the active learning that occurs for me in the face-to-face environment."



MATT SLOCUM/AP

**Fred Haag shows how to mix colors during a course from a loft studio at his small farm in Hellam, Pa., on Wednesday.**



## NATION

# Puerto Rico hit with 5.4-magnitude quake

By DANICA COTO  
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — A 5.4-magnitude earthquake struck near southern Puerto Rico on Saturday, briefly knocking out power and forcing the relocation of at least 50 families on an island where some people still remain in shelters from previous quakes earlier this year. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake hit at a depth of 5.6 miles near the city of Ponce and the towns of Guanica and Guayama, where hundreds of homes were destroyed by a quake in early January that killed one person and caused millions of dollars in damage.

The earthquake cracked walls, flung goods off supermarket shelves and caused a second-story balcony to crash in the southern coastal city of Ponce. It occurred amid a two-month lockdown and just hours after the government announced the biggest spike in COVID-19 cases since the first one was reported in March in the U.S. territory.

"This is a crisis on top of another crisis," said Health Secretary Lorenzo Gonzalez.

Most of the damage was reported in Ponce, where officials were still going neighborhood by neighborhood to assess damage as rescue crews fanned out across the region.

"It's time to cry if you have to cry," said Ponce Mayor Maria Mendez. "We're human beings."

Gov. Wanda Vazquez said the 50 families that have to be relocated will not be placed in shelters given concerns about the coronavirus contagion. She also urged Puerto Ricans to stay home even if they want to drive to the island's southern region to help those affected and distribute food as they did earlier this year following the 6.4-magnitude earthquake.

"We're up against an emergency situation, but we can't forget that the most lethal one we have in our hands is COVID-19," she said as she urged people to wear masks and other protective equipment even if they have to evacuate damaged buildings. "If we forget these, the result is going to be worse."



CARLOS GIUSTI/AP

City workers, wearing protective face masks as a precaution against the spread of coronavirus, remove debris caused by a 5.4-magnitude earthquake, in Ponce, Puerto Rico, on Saturday.



PETER AUSTIN, DREAMSTIME/TNS

A report of a bomb on a cargo flight bound for Asia prompted its diversion to Anchorage, Alaska, on Saturday, briefly closing Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

## Alaska airport reopens after false bomb report

By MORGAN KRAKOW  
Alaska Dispatch News, Anchorage

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — A report of a bomb on a cargo flight bound for Asia prompted its diversion to Anchorage on Saturday morning, briefly closing Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

No explosive device was found on the plane, FBI Special Agent Steve Forrest with the Anchorage Field Office said in a statement.

The China Air cargo plane was diverted to Anchorage's international airport after taking off from Seattle. It was headed to Taipei, Taiwan, Forrest said.

The threat was called into the Port of Seattle, Forrest said, and investigators are still trying to discern the source of the threat.

"The FBI does not believe there is any continuing threat to our community as a result of this incident," Forrest said.

The airport had briefly closed to inbound flights during the incident.

The plane was "searched in a secure, remote section of the airport," according to a Facebook post from the airport.

Officers from the FBI and the Anchorage Police Department were on scene Saturday morning, the airport said.

Little Rock police said the boy was found in a bedroom suffering from gunshot wounds after his father, Brent Martin, 32, was killed by police Friday evening. Officers went to the scene after

## Trump allies see some risks with presidential election 6 months away

By JULIE PACE  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Six months from Election Day, President Donald Trump's prospects for winning a second term have been jolted by a historic pandemic and a cratering economy, rattling some of his Republican allies and upending the playbook his campaign had hoped to be using by now against Democrat Joe Biden. Trump's standing has slumped as the nation's focus on him has intensified during the coronavirus outbreak, revealing an erratic and often self-absorbed approach to the crisis. The result: He's losing ground in some battleground states with key constituencies, including senior citizens and college-educated men — all without his Democratic challenger having devoted much energy or money to denting the president.

"It's Donald J. Trump versus the coronavirus and the recovery," said Scott Reed, the senior political strategist for the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. "Biden is a sideshow."

For some Republicans, the prospect of an election that is

almost wholly a referendum on Trump is unnerving. Though the president's base remains loyal, a significant portion of GOP voters view him skeptically on a range of personal qualities. He pulled many of those voters to his side in the 2016 election by drawing an aggressive contrast with Democrat Hillary Clinton. He planned to do the same in 2020 with Biden, with the added tailwind of a surging American economy.

Now, that economy is crumbling around Trump. A staggering 30 million Americans have lost their jobs in the past six weeks as businesses have shuttered due to stay-at-home restrictions aimed at containing the pandemic.

When his back is against the wall, Trump often responds by lashing out at a political opponent, hoping to expose flaws that detract from his own. But with Americans consumed by the pandemic and economic uncertainty, Republicans close to the president and his campaign say Trump's team will struggle to break through with any attacks on Biden for some time. Instead, the public's focus remains squarely on Trump and his handling of the

health and economic crises.

"Trump is completely dominating the public's attention, and it's not helping him," said Alex Conant, a Republican strategist who advised Sen. Marco Rubio's 2016 presidential campaign.

In public polling, the president's approval rating hasn't dropped significantly since the fast-moving virus swept through parts of the U.S. According to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research conducted in late April, 42% of Americans approved of Trump's job performance.

Private polling shows Trump in a weaker position in several pivotal states, including Michigan, Florida and Wisconsin.

Trump's campaign argues the dynamic will reset after the president and his team can unleash a full array of attacks on Biden, who became the presumptive Democratic nominee just as the pandemic began bearing down on the United States.

"We have yet to begin to define him and we have six months to do that," said Tim Murtaugh, Trump's campaign spokesman.

## Arkansas boy, 11, dies after being shot in a hostage situation

Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — An 11-year-old boy who was shot after being taken hostage by his father in Arkansas has died, authorities said Saturday.

Little Rock police said the boy was found in a bedroom suffering from gunshot wounds after his father, Brent Martin, 32, was killed by police Friday evening. Officers went to the scene after

the child's mother, Maranda Alford, showed up at a police substation to report a man had taken her son, Jordan Roberts, hostage. Police sent a SWAT team and said officers entered the home when

they heard gunshots.

Police Chief Keith Humphrey said Martin shot the boy, then was killed when he confronted the officers. The child died later at a hospital.

The officers involved have been placed on administrative leave pending an internal investigation, which the department described as routine for any officer-involved shooting.

## WORLD

# Israeli high court hears petitions against Netanyahu

By ILAN BEN ZION  
Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel's high court began hearing petitions on Sunday against Benjamin Netanyahu forming a government while facing criminal indictments.

The proceedings, held by an exceptionally large panel of 11 justices and in a rare instance also broadcast live, are focusing on the issue of whether a politician can form a government while under indictment — something the Israeli legal code does not explicitly prohibit.

If the court voids Netanyahu's ability to serve as prime minister, Israel could be plunged into political chaos, and it would likely trigger the country's fourth con-

secutive election in just over 12 months.

Sunday's hearing was broadcast live on the high court's website while most of the country remains under coronavirus movement restrictions. The judges, attorneys and clerks wore face masks, and plastic barriers separated each of the 11 justices on the bench.

Netanyahu was indicted earlier this year on charges of accepting bribes, fraud and breach of trust. He has denied any wrongdoing. His trial was postponed due to restrictions his hand-picked interim justice minister placed on the courts after the coronavirus crisis erupted and is scheduled to commence later this month.

Last week, Israel's attorney



ARIEL SCHALIT/AP

A man wearing a face mask for protection holds a sign in front of a poster of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Benny Gantz that reads: "say no to a corrupt government." Another person holds an Israeli flag during Saturday's protest in Tel Aviv, Israel.

general, Avichai Mandelblit, said in an opinion to the court that while Netanyahu's indictments "raise significant problems," there was no legal basis for barring him from serving while facing criminal charges."

Israeli law mandates that Cabinet ministers and mayors resign if

indicted, but prime ministers are not specifically required to step down. In January, the Supreme Court declined to rule on whether Netanyahu could form a government under indictment, saying the matter remained "theoretical" ahead of March's elections.

## 6 dead in Bolivian air force plane crash

LA PAZ, Bolivia — A Bolivian air force plane flying a humanitarian mission crashed minutes after takeoff in the Amazonian region, killing all six occupants, including four Spaniards who were being ferried to catch a flight to their homeland, the Defense Ministry said Saturday.

The Beechcraft Baron, a twin-engine propeller plane, went down in a marshy area on the outskirts of Trinidad, a city in the northeast of the country, the announcement said.

The plane was carrying the Spaniards to the city of Santa Cruz, where they were to board a flight bound for their country.

The ministry said investigators were working to determine the cause of the accident.

## Director who mocked Egyptian president dies

CAIRO — An Egyptian filmmaker detained without trial for more than two years for making a music video that mocked President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi died Saturday at a maximum-security prison complex, two rights lawyers said.

Attorney Ahmed el-Khwaga said his client Shady Habash, 22, died in Cairo's Tora Prison complex. He said the cause of death was not immediately clear.

Khaled Ali, a rights lawyer, said Habash should have been released two months ago after serving the maximum jail time during pending investigations.

Habash's death again put a spotlight on the dangers of Egyptian prisons as el-Sisi escalates a crackdown on dissent. Many inmates are serving time for crimes they insist they did not commit, or have not been charged at all. According to rights groups, thousands are held in Egypt's jails awaiting trial.

From The Associated Press

## Skirmish with rebels kills 5 Indian security personnel

By ALIAJ HUSSAIN  
Associated Press

SRINAGAR, India — Five Indian security personnel and two militants were killed in a major spike in fighting in disputed Kashmir when the army and police stormed a house where rebels were holding hostages, officials said.

A five-member counterinsurgency team entered the house in northwestern Handwara area

Saturday and "successfully extricated the civilians," an Indian army statement said.

The security forces came under heavy gunfire from militants and in the ensuing firefight, two militants and all the team members died, it said.

The statement did not specify how many civilians were rescued. No militant group has immediately commented and there was no independent confirmation of the hostage-taking.

A police officer said an army colonel and a major along with a police officer and two other soldiers tried to storm the hideout when they were gunned down by the militants. The officer spoke on condition of anonymity in keeping with department policy.

India has stepped up its counterinsurgency operations across Kashmir in recent months despite a lockdown to combat the coronavirus. Militants fighting Indian rule have not ceased their

attacks on government forces and alleged informants either.

There has also been almost daily fighting over the last several months along the rugged and mountainous highly militarized frontier that divides Kashmir between India and Pakistan. On Friday, two Indian soldiers were killed in border skirmishes. On Wednesday, a Pakistani soldier and three civilians on both sides of Kashmir were killed in another bout of fighting.

## Stripes SERVICE DIRECTORY

The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market

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# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Corrections officer slips inmate nude pics

**SC** PELZER — A South Carolina correctional officer at the Perry Correctional Institution was accused of sharing nude photographs and contraband food items with an inmate, authorities said.

Kashaila Danei Hawthorne, 28, was charged with providing contraband to a prisoner and misconduct in office, news outlets reported.

The release said Hawthorne gave the inmate nude photographs on a cellphone and prohibited food items on or between Jan. 1 and April 29. An arrest warrant said that Hawthorne also kissed the inmate several times.

## Court rules officer's traffic stop not justified

**NC** RALEIGH — A state trooper's decision to stop a driver who flashed an obscene hand gesture wasn't justified, the North Carolina Supreme Court ruled, overturning lower court decisions.

Trooper Paul Stevens and a local police officer had stopped to help a stranded motorist after a January 2017 snowstorm when Stevens noticed what turned out to be Shawn Patrick Ellis in another vehicle.

Ellis' back-and-forth waving motion with his hand outside the window turned into a pumping up-and-down motion with his middle finger, court documents say.

Associate Justice Robin Hudson returned the case to the trial court.

## Man injured in shootout flees hospital ER

**WA** PARKLAND — A man wounded in a gang-related shootout escaped from a hospital during a "commotion" in an emergency room, police said.

"A group of people showed up; there was a commotion," at St. Joseph Medical Center "and he took off," Pierce County sheriff's spokesman Ed Troyer said.

Investigators believe at least two suspected gang members were involved in the shooting, and the man who fled the emergency room had suffered multiple gunshot wounds. The News Tribune reported. The other person was not injured, authorities said.

That suspect was tracked and pursued by a police dog, but escaped, authorities said.

The sheriff's department, the gang unit and the FBI are investigating.

## Residents steal 44 guns from neighboring state

**GA** THOMASVILLE — A total of 11 Georgia residents were arrested for stealing dozens of guns from a store in Florida's capital city. They include seven men charged as adults plus four charged as juveniles.

Police are looking for two more suspects. Those include police Lt. Toby Knifer told the Thomasville Times-Enterprise.



DEVON RAVINE, NORTHWEST FLORIDA DAILY NEWS/AP

## Life's a beach

Florida attorney Daniel Uhlfelder, dressed as the Grim Reaper, talks with reporters after walking a newly-opened beach near Destin, Fla. Uhlfelder was protesting the Walton County, Fla., Commission's decision to reopen the county's beaches in spite of the pandemic.

Gavin Ivey of Whigham was arrested in Thomas County and taken to Albany, where he was charged with murder in a weekend shooting. Knifer said the investigation shows Ivey bought one of the 44 guns stolen from Kevin's Guns and Sporting Goods in Tallahassee on April 22.

Only one other gun has been recovered.

## Couple charged for coughs, COVID-19 claim

**KS** HESSTON — A Kansas couple shopping at Walmart who authorities said repeatedly coughed on people and claimed the man had contracted the coronavirus were charged with felonies.

Another customer used her cellphone to record Hazel Hamrick, 29, and Ernest Williams, 47, creating the disturbance at a Walmart in Newton.

Hamrick was charged with two counts of criminal threat, while Williams was charged with two counts of aiding and abetting criminal threat. They also both face a misdemeanor charge of disorderly conduct.

## Non-native lizard found in state on Earth Day

**RI** PROVIDENCE — The smallest state has some big news. If you're a biologist, it's first lizard. A five-lined skink dis-

## THE CENSUS

# 400

The approximate weight in pounds of a metal statue of a tiger that was returned after being stolen from a Tucson, Ariz., attraction. The Arizona Daily Star reported that statue owner Jessica Bates Wills said a truck pulled up to Trail Dust Town with the tiger statue. Wills said the driver told her that he had bought the statue at a junk yard without knowing its origin and decided to return it once he found out that it was stolen. Wills said much of the paint on the statue, which had been on the property for about 20 years, has been removed. She said it is in storage until it can be fixed.

covered on Earth Day in Rhode Island is not native to the state, meaning there might be a population here, excited scientists said.

A scientist found the juvenile lizard, small enough to fit in the palm of a hand, in South County and contacted Nancy Karraker, a herpetologist at the University of Rhode Island, who confirmed it was a five-lined skink, WJAR-TV reported.

The skinks previously have been found to the west of the Connecticut River, scientists said.

## Historic emigrant landmark vandalized

**ID** ALMO — Vandals spray-painted graffiti on an historic Idaho landmark in City of Rocks National Reserve in what officials say is the worst case of vandalism in the park's history.

National Reserve superintendent Wallace Keck said that he believes two to six people were involved in the vandalism at Camp

Rock, one of the formations at City of Rocks near Almo in south central Idaho.

Camp Rock was a common camping site in the 1840s and '50s for tens of thousands of emigrants following the California Trail. Many signed their names in axle grease on the site's granite boulders, park officials said. Some of the signatures are still visible and have helped historians research the lives of the people who passed through more than 150 years ago, the Times-News reported.

## Box truck found in lake may be from cold case

**PA** FLEETVILLE — A box truck found at the bottom of a northeastern Pennsylvania lake is believed to have been used in a crime spree more than a decade ago, authorities said.

A man on a fishing boat noticed what appeared to be a vehicle in the Benton Township lake in Lackawanna State Park in Lacka-

wanna County. The vehicle found was filled with a bed of mud inches thick.

The (Scranton) Times-Tribune reported that police suspect the truck is the same one stolen from an electrical contractor in Scott Township. Chief Jared Ganz said investigators believe the truck was then used to steal an ATM from a convenience store.

Investigators are examining the truck for clues in the no-longer-cold case.

## Removal of grounded ship could be delayed

**NC** NAGS HEAD — The coronavirus pandemic could delay the removal of a 72-foot long fishing vessel that has been grounded for weeks on a beach on North Carolina's Outer Banks.

The scallop harvesting boat is considered a safety hazard as curious people climb aboard its rusting hull.

The Virginian-Pilot reported that removing the abandoned boat could cost more than \$60,000.

The ship is named Ocean Pursuit. It ran aground during a storm on March 1 about 50 yards from shore near Oregon Inlet.

From wire reports



## FACES

## Q&amp;A

## Rowland's ode to black beauty

R&amp;B singer grateful for success of new single, 'Coffee'

By MESFIN FEKADU  
Associated Press

**K**elly Rowland says her new single, "Coffee," and its accompanying music video is her "ode to the beauty of black women."

Rowland debuted the breezy R&B track and video featuring black women across a spectrum of shades and colors two weeks ago.

"I just wanted it to be an expression of black beauty and the different variations and tones and body shapes," said Rowland, who shot the video in Miami late last year. "I was really inspired by black women."

The Grammy-winning singer said she first started working on "Coffee" in 2017 but held onto the track, which was co-written by Syd of the alternative R&B band The Internet.

"I was very particular after I had my son about what I was saying and how good it was because I wanted to make him proud," said Rowland, who gave birth in 2014. "I was extremely hard on myself."

In an interview with The Associated Press, 39-year-old Rowland talks about coffee — the song and the drink — as well as signing with Jay-Z's Roc Nation company for management and life in quarantine.

**AP: There's been a really warm response to "Coffee" and its video. How does that make you feel?**

**Rowland:** The morning that it came out, I had this really big weight on my chest. I literally got to my closet and I cried because I was like, "This is what I remember the anxiety and everything feeling like," but this one felt a little different. It's because I've been in business for 20-plus years and it was

like an overwhelming sense of gratitude. When I started seeing, whether it's my fans or new people, or I'm seeing dancers put movement to the song, that's really something to take in and celebrate and be grateful for. It could be completely different. I feel this overwhelming sense of gratitude that literally gives me a ball in my throat. You just don't take anything for granted. You really don't.

**Are you a big coffee drinker?**

I'm a coffee ice-cream girl. Whenever there's affogato close, it has my name on it. I like it when it's iced. I like iced coffee and I drink it with whiskey.

**How's the album coming along?**

I'm very excited about this album. I'm excited for the fact that the years that it took me to find

tempo. ... The whole album's not up-tempo, but I'm excited to share my tempo. I feel like I always had mids and slower records but yeah, I'm ready to dance. Especially when we come out of all this, we need to dance.

**Have you finished the album?**

I have at least one more record to do. In my gut, I feel like I have like one more record to do.

**And you're technically an independent artist now?**

Yes, for now. There have been really cool calls. At the same time, it's such a different space and time in music now. I think in my head it's just navigating it all. I'm definitely independent. It's something about it that I'm really, really loving and there's something about it where you're just like, "Oh I need a little bit more of some budget money to execute some of this."

**Is this album through Roc Nation?**

Roc Nation is my management company.

**And that's new?**

That's new.

**How did that come about?**

It's family and it just happened. It just really happened to work and it's working out really well so far. My team, I have a great team. It's not to say I didn't have a great team before, I had a great team before. You evolve, you move on and that's really it and Roc Nation is home now.

**What have you been doing with your time at home?**

I wish that I would have learned how to work ProTools. I think now, it makes you definitely want to learn. You watch artists like, I heard Ariana Grande does it. I heard Trey Songz does it. So many different artists are like, "Yeah I'm going to do that over," and they're operating their own sessions. I'm like, "Why didn't I learn how to do that?" That's probably my next goal is to learn how to record myself because I could have gotten so many things done. I've been sent songs since being quarantined and I'm literally waiting for my engineer to come out of his quarantine.

**Did you have a goal date for getting the album out?**

No. The thing is, before quarantine, we were at the close of the record. That's when you're like turning records in, talking to writers and producers, starting that whole process of the ending process. It's not that it's slowed down but definitely made things a little more challenging to navigate. We got this. We got this, but definitely, definitely this year. I'm not waiting anymore. I'm not wasting any more time. I'm doing it this year.

**Kelly Rowland debuted her new single, "Coffee," and its music video two weeks ago.**

AP



## 'Goonies' cast among those reuniting online

Associated Press

Josh Gad had a notion about what might soothe the kid in him during a scary time and maybe do the same for others. The actor got to work organizing an online reunion of the cast and creators of the 1985 movie "The Goonies," which quickly tallied a million-plus views.

Gad's YouTube effort isn't alone in providing a screen version of comfort food for the household. With an uncertain future defined by coronavirus and its fallout, old movies, TV reruns and favorite characters offer a way to briefly swap current woes for familiar happy endings.

"It is the absolute right place, right time" to revisit "The Goonies," said Gad, the voice of Olaf the snowman in "Frozen" who was a preschooler when he first saw "Goonies," which he said left an indelible impression of joy. "I think nostalgia is so important right now because we all want to go back to simpler times.

We all are hoping for something we can connect with that reminds of us better days."

"The Goonies" video, featuring cast members including Sean Astin, Josh Brolin, Ke Huy Quan and Kerri Green and producer Steven Spielberg, is raising money for those affected by the pandemic. You can see it online at [tinyurl.com/ya6kwz82](https://tinyurl.com/ya6kwz82).

There have been other COVID-19-related fundraising reunions recently, including a scripted one with the original "Parks and Recreation" cast that aired April 30 on NBC, and an online virtual get-together of "Melrose Place" cast members also held last week.

In "A Parks and Recreation Special," Amy Poehler's Leslie Knope refuses to let social distancing undermine her friendships, trusting in the "power of community to hold people together" and in government as a force for good, both timely themes, sitcom co-creator Mike Schur told a teleconference.

## Other news

■ Prominent Indian actor Rishi Kapoor, a scion of a famous Bollywood family, died April 30. He was 67 and had leukemia. His father, Raj Kapoor, and grandfather, Prithviraj Kapoor, were doyens of Bollywood, the vast Hindi-language film industry based in Mumbai. Rishi Kapoor received the National Film Award for his debut role in his father's 1970 film "Mera Naam Joker" ("My Name is Joker"). He acted in more than 90 films.

■ Mari Winsor, a celebrity trainer for Prithviraj's elite who became known as a Pilates guru, died April 28 from complications of Lou Gehrig's disease. She was 70. Winsor was a featured dancer in music videos including Michael Jackson's "Smooth Criminal" and films such as "Roadhouse" and "Moonwalker." She released multiple fitness DVDs and ran several Pilates studios in the Los Angeles area catering to the biggest stars.



REBECCA CARGO, INVISION/AP

**Actor Josh Gad hosted a recent online reunion/fundraiser with the cast and creatives behind the 1985 film "Goonies."**

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Ernie Gates

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# OPINION

## Take those UFO sightings more seriously

By TYLER COWEN  
Bloomberg Opinion

The official release of some previously leaked UFO videos taken by U.S. Navy pilots has sparked renewed interest in the bigger questions. For sure those flying objects are unidentified, but how much attention should we earthlings devote to this issue? I am struck by the contrast between those who see this as an important question and those who think the whole thing will turn out to be an error or some kind of optical illusion.

Among my friends and acquaintances, the best predictor of how seriously they take the matter is whether they read science fiction in their youth. As you might expect, the science-fiction readers are willing to entertain the more outlandish possibilities. Even if these are not "little green men," the idea that the Chinese or Russians have a craft that can track and outmaneuver the U.S. military is newsworthy in of itself. So would be a secret U.S. craft, especially one unknown to military pilots.

The cynical view is that the science-fiction readers are a bit crazy and are trying to recapture the excitement of their youth by speculating about UFOs. Under this theory, they shouldn't be taken any more seriously than Tolkien fans who wonder if orcs are hiding under the next stone.

The more positive view is that science-fiction readers are more willing to consider new ideas and practices. This kind

of openness presumably is a good thing, at least in general, so why aren't the opinions of more "open" observers accorded more respect? Science-fiction readers have long experience thinking about worlds that are very different from the current one, and perhaps that makes them more perceptive when something truly unusual does come along.

Some of the individuals who were early to see and point out COVID-19 risk, such as tech entrepreneur Balaji Srinivasan, also have taken the UFO reports seriously, perhaps due to the same flexibility of mind.

Another correlation is that people used to thinking probabilistically are more likely to pay attention to UFO news. The chance that the reports reflect "something interesting" might be only 1% or less, but the expected value of that information still is very high — so it is worthy of close attention. If your attitude is, "This is almost certainly nonsense," that's still a case for further investigation, as long as the word "almost" remains.

However much people might pretend otherwise, they do typically judge views by the people who hold them. I now receive lots of emails about ultraviolet light as a remedy for COVID-19. I don't have an opinion on the science per se, but I can't say that I am persuaded by the logic or the writing of these emails. The phrase "tinfoil hat" originally referred to the practice of wearing headgear to block mind-reading, but it has come to refer to a belief in paranoid conspiracy theories more generally.

When it comes to UFOs, of course, the people who are the most interested have a cultish devotion to the topic — and they give the rest of us a bad name. Maybe it's time to stop being put off by that.

My own interest in the nature of UFOs stems partially from a somewhat unlikely source. I have spent a great deal of time in Nahuatl-speaking villages in Mexico doing fieldwork for a book. Residents of those villages are direct descendants of the Aztec empire, which met its doom when a technologically superior conqueror showed up: Hernan Cortes and the Spaniards. The notion that all of a sudden you are not in charge, and that the future will be permanently different from the past, is historically focal to them, as is the notion that there is more to the world than what is right before your eyes.

Most Americans and Europeans are especially bad at internalizing these kinds of historical lessons. But for much of the world, they represent the dominant experience. Humanity has a long history of being caught unawares by outside arrivals, and so we should pay more attention to that bias in ourselves, just as we should have for the arrival of COVID-19.

By the way, as a young teenager my favorite authors were Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke. They are still worth reading.

Tyler Cowen is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist and a professor of economics at George Mason University. This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of the editorial board or Bloomberg LP and its owners.

## At long last, the Supreme Court is going live on air

By BRUCE COLLINS  
Special to The Washington Post

Change is afoot at the Supreme Court. On Monday, the court will, for the first time, allow the news media to provide audio coverage of its oral arguments as they happen. So far, it is only for 10 arguments conducted by teleconference in May, but it is live coverage, which is the bedrock of television journalism.

The court's decision to conduct its business during the pandemic by teleconference is not that much of a surprise because so many other organizations have done the same. The remarkable development is the justices' unexpected step of live coverage. Our network, C-SPAN, has long argued for greater public accessibility to the court and welcomes this change. It has been a long time coming.

By the mid-'80s, C-SPAN was well known for its signature gavel-to-gavel coverage of the House, the Senate and the presidency. In 1988, we made our first formal request to then-Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist for camera access to the court's oral arguments. Later, we teamed up with other TV news networks in making joint overtures to the court to let cameras in, even if to cover only in-chamber ceremonies, such as the swearing in of a new justice.

Rehnquist agreed to let a coalition of more than 15 news organizations, including C-SPAN, conduct a demonstration in the chamber of how a two-camera setup could unobtrusively provide full coverage of oral arguments. Three justices, including the chief, sat at the bench while a lawyer for our media group took questions from the justices about the technology — just like an oral argument. We thought the demonstration went very well. Then, nothing.

So we shifted our attention to the lower federal courts. In 1991, at the urging of our media group, Rehnquist approved a four-



On Monday, the U.S. Supreme Court will, for the first time, allow the news media to provide audio coverage of its oral arguments as they happen.

year experiment with televised federal trial and appeals courts. Our thinking was that if the lower courts accepted camera coverage, it would become easier for the Supreme Court to do so. Despite a report at the end of the experiment that the broadcasts did not interfere with the administration of justice and even had public benefits, it was as if the Supreme Court had put it in the circular file. Again, nothing happened.

Meanwhile, federal court rules changed so that several of them, in particular the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 2nd and 9th circuits, chose to continue camera coverage, without incident. Over the years, several members of Congress, notably Sens. Richard Durbin, D-Ill.; Charles Grassley, R-Iowa; and Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., helped champion the presence of cameras in the federal courts.

A breakthrough of sorts occurred in late November 2000, when it became clear, unexpectedly, that the presidential election could be determined by the Supreme

Court. C-SPAN promptly hand-delivered a letter to Rehnquist requesting that, given the extraordinary level of public interest in the Bush v. Gore case, our cameras be allowed in to provide live coverage. Instead, the chief justice announced the court would release an audio recording of the oral argument shortly after it was completed. Even though it wasn't camera access, it nevertheless marked a major departure for the court. That same day, a highly interested national audience was able to watch C-SPAN and other news outlets air — with photos of the lawyers, justices and explanatory graphics — the momentous argument that had happened in the chamber only a few hours earlier.

In the years since, the Roberts Court has continued to release same-day audio of some high-profile cases, but only when requested by C-SPAN or other news organizations. Apparently, the court tired of making these decisions on a case-by-case basis, so it decided to release the audio of all its arguments every Friday. Delayed release was an unsatisfying compromise for journalists, but it was yet another small step toward broader access by the public to the Supreme Court.

Now, the court is giving the public live access to its arguments for the month of May. All of them will air live across C-SPAN's platforms. Among the 10 cases are three on May 12 regarding the release of President Donald Trump's tax records, which will certainly heighten the public's interest in the court's broadcasting experiment. Having been given live access to the court in the spring, the public and the news media would certainly expect to have it in the fall when a new term begins. The court's move toward greater transparency should continue after the pandemic abates — and once the justices have become comfortable with live access, adding video coverage is the next logical step.

Bruce Collins is the general counsel for C-SPAN.

## OPINION

## Why no days at the beach amid coronavirus?

By GEORGE SKELTON  
Los Angeles Times

Every Californian has an unalienable right to a day at the beach. Or at least an hour or two.

OK, maybe just a few minutes daydreaming in a car while marveling at the foaming breakers. Of course, most beach parking lots are now closed to you and me.

Going to the beach is our birthright as native Californians — and our promise to newcomers. It's our gift from the Creator — a trade-off for all the quakes, wildfires, mudslides and smog.

Yeah, I know: Every right has limits. We've got the right to free speech but shouldn't wade into the surf and yell "shark." And we shouldn't be spreading germs to other sunbathers.

So hire some beach patrols and enforce the rule about plopping down no closer than 6 feet apart. Maybe after a couple of warnings issue a citation for enough bucks to cover the administrative costs.

Although, honestly, I can't envision a young couple adhering to the 6-foot rule for more than five minutes.

And forget about wearing masks on the beach. One of the ocean's appeals is breathing in that salt air drifting in on a soft breeze.

My parents left Oklahoma and Tennessee in the 1920s searching for the California dream. They met at a Ventura beach party. I practically grew up on beaches between Ventura and Santa Barbara — Hollywood Beach, the Rincon, Carpinteria, East Beach — while sheltering in Ojai.

At Ventura College, I often took my reading assignment down to a secluded beach on the Rincon. Later at San Jose State, I immediately noticed how pale most northern students were at summer and compared to Southern California beach worshippers. In Santa Cruz, the sun shined less and the water was colder. But it was still paradise.

Recently, it was reassuring to notice that Ventura politicians still get it. Beaches are the substance of local peoples' lives. The



Beachgoers converge under a pier Thursday in Huntington Beach, Calif. California Gov. Gavin Newsom has ordered beaches in Orange County to close until further notice amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

City Council decided to open them on the first spectacular weekend of the season "in support of balancing residents' physical and mental health." Yes, a warm sun, calm breeze and a little body surfing will do wonders for the mind, relaxing it and enabling the toleration of all manner of aggravations while sheltering at home.

Of course, leaders of my old beach town weren't very hospitable to outsiders. They told Angelenos to stay out.

"To our L.A. County brothers and sisters, normally we like you to come here, but not right now," county Executive Officer Mike Powers was quoted in the Ventura County Star. "If you have to travel, keep it to essential travel where you live."

Guess you can't blame people in Ven-

tura, which has avoided being hard hit by COVID-19, for fearing being overrun by residents in more densely populated LA, where the coronavirus continues to spread. LA has kept its beaches closed. But they were opened in Orange County. And the Newport Beach City Council rejected a proposal to close down the beach after people swarmed there on the hot weekend.

"I think you should reopen them," state Sen. John Moorlach said Tuesday. He's a former Orange County supervisor who represents some beach communities. "People should have access to facilities."

Moorlach says he understands why people flocked there on a beautiful weekend.

"You need to trust people," the senator says. "If they exercise proper social dis-

tancing, you've got to let people be people. If you're part of a vulnerable group, shame on you for going to the beach. For everyone else who's sheltering in place, the beach may be the best medicine."

"We haven't seen the 'surge' in virus contagion that was feared, he continues. "And I'm not seeing a wide band of people in ICUs. I see hospitals in my district struggling because they don't have patients. Something's amazing. Maybe people are seeing that, too."

What Gov. Gavin Newsom said — those crowded beach scenes — made him angry.

"Those images are an example of what not to see ... what not to do," the governor declared during his virus briefing last Monday. "You didn't see those images at LA beaches and San Diego beaches and (in) Northern California because we had strong guidelines that were not only adopted but were abided by."

So amend the guidelines and loosen up. Instead, sadly, the governor announced Thursday he's closing Orange County beaches. Thankfully he backed away from closing all beaches in California.

The TV angles were bad — made the beaches look more crowded than they really were, Moorlach says.

"Everyone did social distancing. (It) was real cooperative and very respectful. They just wanted to get out and get some sun, which is really healthy."

If it's unhealthy, if people are being infected both the virus by being drawn to the ocean as humans always have, show us some data. Do people who go to the beach contract the virus more than people who don't? Show us the numbers.

Until then, here's my declaration of independence from shallow thinking:

Let's face both the truths to be self-evident, that all Californians are endowed with certain unalienable rights. Among these are sun, surf and a day at the beach."

Newsom could use some beach time.

Political columnist George Skelton has covered government and politics for nearly 60 years and for the Los Angeles Times since 1974.

## Why Pakistan's mosques are open is part of the danger

By MADHA AFZAL  
Special to The Washington Post

Perform your ablutions at home. Bring your own prayer mats, place them six feet apart. Wear masks.

Use the provided hand sanitizer. No handshakes or hugs allowed. No talking in the mosque. No one over 50 years old can enter. No children allowed.

These guidelines are part of a list of 20 standard operating procedures that Pakistan's government issued April 18, possibly in consultation with the country's religious clerics, for mosque congregations during Ramadan. In reality, the government caved in to the demands of clerics, who earlier that week said that they would refuse to limit Ramadan congregations, thus a growing number of COVID-19 cases in the country. In Pakistan, the religious right — an amalgam of Islamist political parties and the ulama, or religious clerics — has functioned as a potent pressure force on the country's government since its inception. It is doing so amid this COVID-19 pandemic.

Anyone who has been inside a mosque in Pakistan knows these guidelines are impractical to follow. And enforcement is essentially impossible given the sheer number of mosques in the country, each holding prayers five times a day, in addition to the evening beach prayers during Ramadan. Already, a report from a non-

government organization in Pakistan's Punjab province said 80% of the mosques it visited in the last full week of April were violating guidelines. As of Friday, Pakistan reported 17,700 COVID-19 cases, with more than 400 deaths.

The government's line was that it did not want to take unilateral action, that people would have gone to mosques anyway, and that a consensus or "middle ground" solution was necessary. Prime Minister Imran Khan has also said that because Pakistan is "an independent nation" — a democracy — it cannot force mosque closures. But these excuses only distract from the real story. Pakistan's Islamist parties have an outside influence on government, despite having little in the way of direct electoral seats, due to their street power — or ability to generate numbers of followers in the streets for protests — and coalition-building abilities in Parliament. These parties are also used opportunistically by opposition parties and the military as a spoiler against governments in power.

Some argue that Pakistani military dictator Gen. Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq gave the Islamists power in the 1980s in his bid to Islamize the country's institutions. In reality, Islamist parties have influenced Pakistan's trajectory from its founding. They pressured the writers of its first constitution to declare it an Islamic republic and add key Islamic provisions to the constitution. Islamists have compelled both

military dictators (such as Ayub Khan in the 1960s) and personally secular politicians (Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in the 1970s) to give in to their demands. Religio-legal institutions such as the Council of Islamic Ideology constitutionally only have advisory powers to Parliament, but they typically step beyond their bounds and mandate.

Over the decades, Pakistan's population has grown more religious, led by the state's Islamic vision and actions. In a nationwide Pew poll in Pakistan in 2011, 84 percent of respondents said that they favored making Sharia the official law of the land. Some mosque attendees say that prayer is even more necessary in a pandemic. But they also say that the government would have shut down mosques if the pandemic were a truly serious matter.

Pakistan's state consistently underestimates what it can ask its citizens to do and how it can keep Islamists at bay. Imran Khan, who has furnished his conservative image during his time in politics, has more credibility with Islamists than most. In 2018, this allowed him to take action against a fundamentalist movement that argues for even stricter implementation of Pakistan's harsh blasphemy laws. But he has had a tough year and a half in office, dealing with Pakistan's troubled economy and domestic political crises, with the army consistently encroaching on his power. A prominent Islamist led a huge protest against him last fall to try to

oust his government. Khan does not want to take on a new fight.

Pakistan's provinces have given him a bit of an out: They have consistently imposed stricter lockdowns and limited mosque congregations when Khan's federal government has failed to do so — especially Sindh province, which has banned gatherings during Ramadan as well. Khan is adopting a bit of a Trumpian attitude with states: letting them do the hard work, while he muddles the narrative from the top.

Khan has also said that the government will have no choice but to close down mosques if the guidelines aren't followed or if mosques become a vector for the spread of the virus. Pakistan's doctors argue this is inevitable given the guidelines.

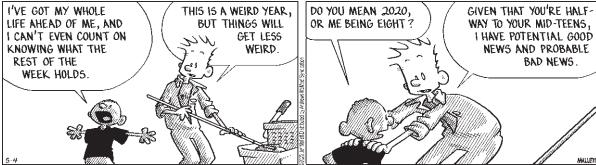
Khan may be trying to have his cake and eat it, too, but Pakistan's army has him in a box: It is reportedly unhappy with Khan's waffling and gimmicky initiatives in his coronavirus response. It's hard to imagine that the army will be patient with mosques spreading the virus all over the country.

Ultimately, mosques staying open in Pakistan is simply the manifestation of the political rights of its civilian institutions have always had to walk as they have contended with both its army and its Islamists. We should hope its citizens don't have to pay the price.

Madha Afzal is a David M. Rubenstein fellow at the Brookings Institution and author of "Pakistan Under Siege: Extremism, Society, and the State."



Frazz



Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



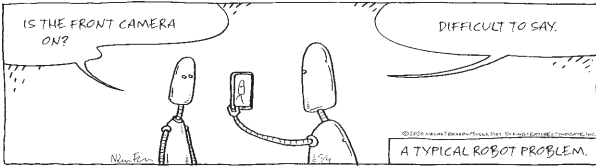
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Candorville



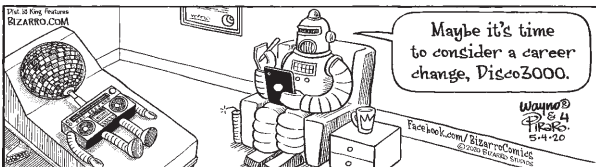
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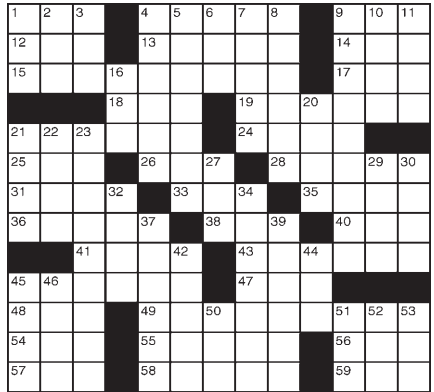
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



## Eugene Sheffer Crossword



### ACROSS

- 1 Deli meat
- 4 Squander
- 9 "Survivor" airtel
- 12 British verb ending
- 13 Sci-fi visitor
- 14 Noah's boat
- 15 Country music duo with the hit song "Want To"
- 17 Opposing vote
- 18 — Hill (R&B group)
- 19 Ambulance sounds
- 21 Heckled
- 24 Peron and Longoria
- 25 Lincoln nickname
- 26 Morning moisture
- 28 Blow one's top
- 31 Surrealist Joan
- 33 Speck
- 35 Swelled heads
- 36 Baby bird?
- 38 Doze (off)
- 40 Swiss peak
- 41 Salty waters
- 43 Oyster products
- 45 Barnard grad
- 47 Biol. or chem. thread
- 49 Rio de Janeiro mountain
- 54 Italian article

### 55 Kate's sitcom

- partner
- 56 Kitchen gadget
- brand
- 57 Sailor
- 58 Stylish wrap
- 59 Bewitch

### DOWN

- 1 That guy's
- 2 Tempe sch.
- 3 Jo's sister
- 4 Did battle
- 5 Referred (to)
- 6 "Chandelier" singer
- 7 On edge
- 8 Salad leaf
- 9 Domino product
- 10 Muffin choice
- 11 "The — the limit!"
- 16 Wood-shaping tool
- 20 Scarce
- 21 Runs (into)
- 22 Slightly
- 23 Diet soda variety
- 27 Triumphed
- 29 Survey
- 30 Recipe amts.
- 32 Utah city
- 34 Schooner feature
- 37 Sunflower State
- 39 Edict
- 42 — Ste. Marie
- 44 Be sick
- 45 Border on
- 46 Sultry Horne
- 50 Day- — paint
- 51 Sound of delight
- 52 Log chopper
- 53 Sly one

### Answer to Previous Puzzle



### 5-4

### CRYPTOQUIP

EKKFWFCS QDEJM EK MAEMSA

WGEIAV LE QE EJL CVU

DAMDIAVL IFVQAD DAAIA:

LGA UASSC-QCLFEV.

Saturday's Cryptquip: NORMAL QUALITY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF A FAST PIRATE SHIP: PAR FOR THE CORSAIR.

Today's Cryptquip Clue: K equals F

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# BEST SPORTS MOVIES

## No. 8 (tied) 'Major League'

# Film kept just a bit inside lines of believability

By NOAH TRISTER  
Associated Press

The door to the bullpen swings open, a reliever emerges and a familiar song comes blasting through the stadium's PA system, energizing the crowd.

Before Hall of Famers Mariano Rivera and Trevor Hoffman took the mound with this type of fanfare, there was Ricky Vaughn, the fictitious bad-boy pitcher who entered the climactic game of the movie "Major League" with the song "Wild Thing" announcing his presence.

"I was listening to the recording of 'Wild Thing' and the original one by the Troggs, but the one by X, and it was such a big sound, it sounded like a thousand people were singing it," said David S. Ward, the movie's director. "I thought, this would be really interesting if people got so into this kid, this pitcher, that when he came into the game, they would stand up and sing 'Wild Thing.'"

"Major League" didn't invent the idea of an entrance song for a reliever, but the 1989 film was certainly onto something when Vaughn, played by Charlie Sheen, strode to the mound to help the Cleveland Indians out of a jam in the ninth inning against the Yankees. It's a scene that has aged particularly well — and one that exemplifies why the movie remains so endearing.

For all its goofy antics, exaggerated characters and memorable one-liners, "Major League" also stands out because the play on the field — especially at the end — feels reasonably authentic. And that was no small feat.



ERIC ALLEN, INVISION/AP

Actor Dennis Haysbert played curvball-challenged slugger Pedro Cerrano in the movie "Major League."

## About the film

**Year:** 1989  
**Screenwriter:** David S. Ward  
**Director:** Ward  
**Starring:** Tom Berenger, Charlie Sheen, Corbin Bernsen, Rene Russo, Bob Uecker

**Plot:** The Cleveland Indians win despite a new owner (Margaret Whitton) who wants to sabotage and relocate the team.

**Iconic Line:** "Juuuuuuuuust a bit outside." — Commentator Harry Doyle (Uecker)

**Oscars:** No nominations  
— Associated Press

The film was voted No. 8 in The Associated Press Top 25 favorite sports movies poll.

"I think that the baseball in the movie, I think it was pretty good baseball," said Steve Yeager, the longtime Los Angeles Dodgers catcher who played a coach in the movie and was a technical advisor for the film. "I never heard anybody that I played with or played against who said anything bad about it."

Yeager prepared cast members to look the part of major leaguers. One concern was getting the actors in baseball shape, since an injury could set back the shooting schedule.

"I would have actors come in and tell me, 'Yeah, I played Triple-A ball for the Cardinals.' And then I'd go out and just say, 'Well, let's throw the ball around a little bit,' and they couldn't throw the ball 15 feet," Ward said. "They were just lying. Actors do that."

Ward ultimately ended up with a memorable collection of talent, from both an acting standpoint and a baseball one. Sheen and Corbin Bernsen, who played third baseman Roger Dorn, had enough athletic experience for their roles. Dennis Haysbert, who played curvball-challenged slugger Pedro Cerrano, played baseball growing up.

"I think Steve got a little angry with me," Haysbert said with a laugh. "He was well known for his arm, so he was throwing batting practice, and I think the first pitch he threw me, I hit it out."

Haysbert enjoyed his work in the movie enough that he joined an adult league afterward.

One actor who didn't have much baseball experience was Wesley Snipes, who played speedy outfielder Willie Mays Hayes. He was a quick learner, though.



DAVID J. PHILLIP/AP

Actor Charlie Sheen reacts during the fifth inning of Game 4 of the 2016 National League baseball championship series between the Chicago Cubs and the Los Angeles Dodgers in Los Angeles. Sheen played Ricky "Wild Thing" Vaughn in the movie "Major League."

**'Baseball is looking for guys who are a little more flamboyant, and of course 'Major League' is full of them.'**

David S. Ward  
Director of 'Major League'

"He actually learned how to hit popups, and that is not easy. ... That catch that he makes leaping up over the fence — he actually made that catch. It wasn't a hit ball. Yeager was throwing the balls," Ward said. "You will notice that you never see Wesley throw the ball in the movie. ... The hardest thing to learn to do if you've never played baseball is to throw it — and to throw it with any kind of a motion that looks natural. He couldn't throw."

Hayes slides in with the winning run in the movie's last game. That close play at the plate required a few takes, since the timing had to be just right.

"We must have ran it three or four times. I know he had a big strawberry," Yeager said. "I went and asked David, 'If you can get all the cameras, get them out there because he's probably got one good slide left in him.'"

There's a careful balance in the movie between comedy and believability, and by the end, there's real drama when the Indians host the Yankees in a one-game playoff in a packed ballpark. That scene was filmed in Milwaukee — Ward said Cleveland's cavernous Municipal Stadium was so big it would have been hard to make it look full.

County Stadium, then the home of the Brewers, looked similar enough to the Cleveland park, and the crowd gave actors a brief chance to experience what it's like to be a big league ballplayer.

"I was standing next to (Yeager) in the dugout, when they had the audience and the fans roar," Haysbert said. "Steve was standing next to me and he said, 'Hey,



CHRIS CARLSON/AP

**Longtime Los Angeles Dodgers catcher Steve Yeager played a coach in the movie and was a technical advisor for the film.**

look at your arm.' And I looked at my arm and I had all these goosebumps, and my hair was standing on end. And he said, 'That's what it's like 162 games a year.'"

When Vaughn comes into the game, the movie certainly foreshadows a future trend. Nowadays, it's common for relievers to have their own songs. A couple years ago, MLB.com traced that phenomenon back decades. In the 1970s, for example, the Yankees would play "Pomp and Circumstance" for Sparky Lyle's entrance.

The scene with "Wild Thing" is similar to what happens today — up to a point.

"The girls dancing on top of the dugout, I didn't tell them to do that," Ward said. "They just did it."

There's another remarkable moment in that final game, when Cerrano homers to tie the score and then carries his bat with him all the way around the bases.

"That was in the script. I felt really weird about doing that, because that doesn't happen, and I'm a realist," Haysbert said. "I'd get thrown out of the game."

But maybe Cerrano was ahead of his time. In last year's World Series, Houston's Alex Bregman ran all the way to first base with his bat when he hit a homer, and then Washington's Juan Soto responded by doing the same on one of his home runs.

For Ward, part of the enduring legacy of "Major League" is its entertaining characters. That's taken to an extreme in the movie for comedic effect, but he mentioned Bryce Harper, Francisco Lindor and Yasiel Puig as a few players in today's game who put their personalities on display.

"Baseball is looking for guys who are a little more flamboyant, and of course 'Major League' is full of them," Ward said. "We went into this sort of conservative period with baseball where you weren't supposed to show any emotion about anything, but I think we're coming out of that, and I think we're going to see a more colorful game, with more colorful players, and players who aren't afraid to show that they're enjoying the game."

**Editor's note:** Recently, the Associated Press revealed its Top 25 of sports movies, as voted on by 70 writers and editors around the world. After compiling the list, the AP assigned writers to present stories examining the Top 10 from unique perspectives. This is the second and third (opposite page) in the series, a look at the impact of the films that tied for 8th-best film, "Major League" and "The Natural."



## BEST SPORTS MOVIES

## No. 8 (tied) 'The Natural'

## Charboneau's career played out like Hobbs'

'Super Joe' had unnaturally uncanny ties to 1984 film, including a bit part

BY PAT GRAHAM  
Associated Press

Joe Charboneau sees a little bit of himself in the iconic baseball film "The Natural."

Outside of the obvious, which is that the former Cleveland Indians outfielder actually appeared in a few scenes of the 1984 film that finished tied for No. 8 in The Associated Press Top 25 favorite sports movies poll.

Movie line: "They would've said, 'There goes Roy Hobbs, the best there ever was in this game,'" Robert Redford's character, Roy Hobbs, lamented of his shortened career.

Cue Charboneau, the 1980 AL Rookie of the Year.

In many ways, Charboneau's career played out much like the script for the film: Slugger gets stabbed before his major league debut (Hobbs was shot). One memorable season. Injuries curtail career. Fade to the credits — he's enjoying the game (not in a wheat field playing catch, but as the hitting coach at Notre Dame College in Ohio).

"Isn't it funny how life parallels itself?" the 64-year-old Charboneau said. "Maybe I was meant to almost be in that movie."

Movie line: "All right, Hobbs, knock the cover off the ball," manager Pop Fisher hollered.

The charismatic Charboneau arrived on the scene as that promising prospect who was the life of the party. His off-the-field tales were epic — opened beer bottles with his forearm or twice, he clarified. Fixed a broken nose with pliers. Stitched up a cut with fishing line.

His exploits on the field were storied, too, for a player nick-

named "Super Joe." In 1979, Charboneau batted .352 with 21 homers for Cleveland's Double-A affiliate Chattanooga.

On deck, the big leagues. During spring training in 1980, he accompanied the Indians to Mexico City for an exhibition game.

He never even saw the stabbing coming.

Sound familiar? Movie line: "I didn't see it coming," Hobbs talking about being shot in the stomach in a hotel early in his career.

In Charboneau's case, he was outside the team hotel — in uniform — and waiting with his teammates before heading to the field. A stranger approached.

"He asked me where I was from," Charboneau said. "And then he stabbed me."

A puncture wound to the stomach with what police told him was a pen knife. His fast reflexes, though, prevented more damage, because he grabbed the attacker's wrist before the weapon plunged too deep.

"I actually felt worse for him," Charboneau said. "My teammates jumped him and beat the hell out of him."

The wound was severe enough that doctors told him to go home for a few weeks to recover.

He rested. He had a roster to make.

"So I just kind of gutted through it and played," he said.

A month later, he was in the opening-day lineup on April 11 for the banged-up Indians, who shuffled things around with Andre Thornton sidelined.

Movie line: "Pick me out a winner, Bobby," Hobbs to the bat boy after his bat breaks.

Playing left field and batting seventh, Charboneau sent a low



SAL VEDER/AP

Cleveland Indians left fielder Joe Charboneau gets jammed in the batting cage at Cleveland's spring training camp in Tucson, Ariz., in 1982. The charismatic Charboneau arrived on the scene as a promising prospect who was the life of the party. Charboneau, the 1980 American League Rookie of the Year, sees a little bit of himself in the iconic baseball film "The Natural," in which he played a small part.



JEFF PIORKOWSKI, THE PLAIN DEALER/AP

Charboneau, shown in 2014, is enjoying the game as the hitting coach at Notre Dame College in Ohio and by serving as an ambassador for the Indians.

slider from Angels starter Dave Frost over the fence in right-center in his second career at bat.

It was the launch of a rookie season that saw him hit .289 with 23 homers and 87 RBIs.

He even inspired a catchy tune ("Go Joe Charboneau") with lyrics such as: "Who's the one to keep our hopes alive? Go, Joe Charboneau."

In the rookie of the year voting, he edged Boston infielder Dave Stapleton. Hall of Famer Harold Baines also was a rookie that season.

Big things for sure awaited, he thought.

Then, a head-first slide into second base during spring training in '81 left him with an injured back. He was never the same.

Charboneau had back surgery

at the end of a sophomore season in which he hit .210 in just 48 games. In '82, another back surgery after batting .214 in 22 games.

The Indians released him in 1983 after he struggled at Double-A Buffalo.

He was picked up by the "New York Knights" — Hobbs' team in the "The Natural."

Movie line: "You know my mother told me I ought to be a farmer," Fisher said. "My dad wanted me to be a baseball player," Hobbs responded.

Charboneau was originally scheduled to be an outfielder in a movie directed by Barry Levinson and filmed at Buffalo's War Memorial Stadium. But at 6-foot-2, Charboneau was taller than Redford's power-hitting character ("looked kind of weird," he said).

Instead, Charboneau had a new assignment — line up local baseball talent as extras and put the actors through a "spring training" workout to make them look more authentic. Not Redford, though, because Charboneau said he was already a natural.

Charboneau does make an appearance in two scenes — in the locker room and at the singing of the National Anthem.

"If you blink, you miss me," he said.

A side benefit to training the actors was it kept him in shape as the Pittsburgh Pirates invited him to camp in '84. He made two stops in their minors that season, hitting a combined .281 with eight homers, before calling it a career.

Well, not technically. He coached in the Frontier League

and was sent in to pinch-hit for the Canton Crocodiles in 2000 as a promotional stunt.

He singled.

These days, Charboneau is the hitting coach for a Notre Dame College baseball team that's managed by his onetime teammate Len Barker. Their spring season was halted after a 3-8 start due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Charboneau and Barker also serve as ambassadors for the Indians.

Movie line: "I could've broke every record in the book," Hobbs said.

Cue Charboneau. "Wish I could've played longer," Charboneau said. "Just to see what I could do."

## About the film

Year: 1984

Screenwriters: Roger Towne, Phil Dusenberry, based on a novel by Bernard Malamud

Director: Barry Levinson

Starring: Robert Redford, Robert Duvall, Glenn Close, Kim Basinger

Plot: Years after getting shot while he was a young prospect, Roy Hobbs (Redford) makes it to pro baseball with hard-to-believe talent.

Iconic Line: "I coulda broke every record in the book. ... And then when I walked down the street, people would've looked and they would've said, 'There goes Roy Hobbs, the best there ever was in this game.'" — Hobbs (Redford)

Oscars: 4 nominations

— Associated Press



MARK DUNCAN/AP

Charboneau lies on a bed at Cleveland's Lutheran Hospital on Oct. 19, 1981, as he recovers from surgery to correct a herniated disc. After one great season, his career faded due to injuries.

## NFL/AUTO RACING/SOCCER

## Briefs

## Dalton to join Cowboys

Associated Press

Andy Dalton is coming home to Texas as Dak Prescott's backup with the Dallas Cowboys.

Dalton and the Cowboys agreed Saturday to a one-year deal that guarantees the former Cincinnati starter \$3 million and could be worth up to \$7 million. The agreement was first reported by ESPN.

The Cowboys reached a deal with Dalton two days after he was released by the Bengals.

Dalton, born and raised in the Houston area, led TCU to an undefeated season that included a Rose Bowl victory over Wisconsin during the 2010 season before the Bengals drafted him in the second round.

The Cowboys have relied on the untested Cooper Rush behind Prescott the past two seasons. The 32-year-old Dalton marks their biggest investment in a veteran backup since Prescott replaced the injured Tony Romo as a rookie in 2016 and ended up taking his job for good.

Dalton started 133 games for the Bengals and led the franchise's best stretch of playoff appearances — five straight from 2011-15.

Dalton's 70-61-2 record as a starter is second best by a Bengals quarterback with at least 10 starts, trailing Virgil Carter. Dalton holds the club records for touchdown passes (204) and completions (2,757).

## Bears decline Trubisky's fifth-year option

The Chicago Bears have declined their fifth-year option for



FRANK VICTORES/AP

**Former Bengals quarterback Andy Dalton has agreed to join the Dallas Cowboys as Dak Prescott's backup. Dalton and the Cowboys agreed to a one-year deal that guarantees the former Cincinnati starter \$3 million and could be worth up to \$7 million.**

quarterback Mitchell Trubisky for the 2021 season, a person familiar with the situation said Saturday.

The person spoke on the condition of anonymity because the move has not been announced. The NFL Network first reported the decision.

The move is hardly a surprise considering the way Trubisky struggled in his third season since the Bears drafted him with the No. 2 overall pick. His yards (3,138), completion rate (63.2%), touchdowns (17) and rating (83) all dropped from the previous year.

The Bears acquired 2018 Super Bowl MVP Nick Foles from Jacksonville in March and plan to hold an open competition for the starting job.

The Bears traded up a spot with San Francisco to draft him ahead of Kansas City's Patrick Mahomes and Houston's Deshaun Watson. While Mahomes and Watson have emerged as two of the NFL's best quarterbacks, Trubisky has mixed promising flashes with too many poor decisions and throws. And he is facing a murky future in Chicago.

The Bears went 8-8 and missed the playoffs for the eighth time in nine years last season after winning the NFC North at 12-4. Though their defense continued to excel, their offense ranked among the worst in the NFL.

In other NFL news:

■ The Kansas City Chiefs have

agreed to a contract with defensive end and Taco Charlton, adding a former first-round pick who flamed out in Dallas and Miami but whose athleticism is a perfect match for coordinator Steve Spagnuolo's defense.

The 25-year-old Charlton was the 28th overall selection in the 2017 draft.

He made seven starts for the Cowboys before sustaining a shoulder injury, and he was waived just two weeks into last season. The Dolphins signed Charlton and he made five starts and appeared in 10 games, but he was a healthy scratch the last four games of the regular season.

The Dolphins waived him Thursday and the Chiefs were able to sign him when he cleared waivers Friday.

■ The Jacksonville Jaguars have declined to pick up the fifth-year option in running back Leonard Fournette's rookie contract. The decision Friday was no surprise because the team tried to trade Fournette over the past month. General manager Dave Caldwell had conversations with Tampa Bay and Miami, but neither made a worthwhile offer.

The deadline for teams to exercise the option is Monday. The Jaguars also signed veteran running back Chris Thompson to a one-year deal Friday, reuniting him with former Washington coach Jay Gruden. Gruden is entering his first year as Jacksonville's offensive coordinator.

## Virtual: iRacing hopes to grow from recent success

## FROM BACK PAGE

virtual gaming during the shutdown.

At Dover International Speedway, the finishing touches should have been applied last week, the sponsor signage added, everything spruced up for what would have been a NASCAR Cup Series race Sunday.

Instead, NASCAR drivers will spend the day on those simulators at virtual Dover. Blake Shelton is the grand marshal for the track that has been in the sim company's bank for years, and David Hasselhoff was to sing the national anthem. Hendrick Motorsports driver William Byron is the favorite for the fourth straight race. There's no chance of rain. The real stars of iRacing are the 3D car artists, software programmers and engineers — in NASCAR parlance, the team back at the shop.

They visit tracks with laser scanners on tripods to capture in perfect detail every bump, curve, crack and painted line in a digital point cloud. The crew takes up to 10,000 pictures of, not just the track, but any grandstands, bridges or other structures in the distance connected to the property. It can take four to six months to finish first photos to simulated finish.

"We've always had a commitment to authenticity at all costs," said Greg Hill, who leads the art and production teams at iRacing. "That's a lot of hard work. In some ways, it puts you in a niche, but as we've found with this COVID-19, having had that commitment to authenticity has led to outfits like NASCAR and all these drivers going to us and bringing us this attention."

The numbers — even some real-life bumps, like Kyle Larson's racial slur that cost him his NASCAR ride — bear it out: iRacing, formed in 2004, has added roughly 70,000 subscribers (at up to \$55 per year) over the course of the pandemic and become a ratings hit on the weekends. Fox Sports says five pro events — keyed by

the star power of today's top Cup drivers and retired greats — have averaged 1.135 million viewers, topped by 1.53 million for the Texas virtual race.

The virtual series, which skewes toward the coveted 18-to-34 demographic, passed 100,000 active customers in January and hit 170,000 this week.

"Our theory was always, if the racers like it and they find it useful, then the rest of the general public that enjoys this sport is going to enjoy it as well," Myers said.

Gaming, of course, and social platforms have been a major accessory during the pandemic. Games like Fortnite, once a nuisance to parents, are now decade baby-sitters. Twitch recently reported a 176% increase in hours watched compared to the previous quarter. YouTube Gaming and Facebook Gaming also saw spikes in streaming traffic in the first quarter of this year.

TinTheFatman, DrLupo and Ninja (ask your kids) are this generation's Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods.

Simulated drivers haven't seen their Q score peak just yet — perhaps they should try dodging turtle shells or dodge a thunderbolt — but the question is often raised: Is iRacing a video game?

"People get so hung up on the term simulation vs. a video game," Myers said with a laugh. "I like to say, we are what you want it to be."

Whatever the genre, it's entertainment for fans across the globe to race like their favorite drivers at tracks they may never visit or have always wanted to tame.

The checked flag is nearing for the weekly national exposure that put iRacing on the real world sports map.

"One day off we've had since this started was Easter," Myers said. "It probably won't register what we've done and accomplished until we get a couple of weeks down the road here, NASCAR is back on TV and we can sit back and be fans again."

## Legal action fears if Premier League season doesn't finish

By ROB HARRIS

Associated Press

The Premier League could face years of legal challenges if this season is not completed due to the coronavirus pandemic, the chairman of Crystal Palace warned Sunday.

Steve Parish offered public support for the league's "Project Restart" plans after relegation-threatened Brighton and West Ham expressed concerns about teams being forced to play their remaining games in neutral stadiums.

The league is working with the government to find a safe way for players to resume group training and play games by June at the earliest.

But the French and Dutch league seasons have already been halted by their governments amid ongoing concerns

about sporting fixtures spreading COVID-19 infections. While Paris Saint-Germain was crowned French champion last week despite Ligue 1 ending prematurely, Ajax was not.

"I want to complete the competition for reasons of sporting integrity," Parish said in a column published Sunday on the Palace website. "I want to crown Liverpool champions and give every other club a fair crack at the best league position they can achieve. I certainly don't want to have difficult conversations about curtailing, voiding and points per game."

"The ramifications of each are complex and could involve legal challenges that run on for months, if not years. But, yes, it is partly about the money. And we should all care about the money."

Parish highlighted the "many secondary industries football enriches," with the

Premier League fearing losses of more than 1 billion pounds from an incomplete campaign as broadcasting commitments are not met.

"Nobody wins if the Premier League receives less money," Parish said. "Football is one of the most efficient tax-generating industries in Britain: we pay the players a lot but 50% goes straight back into the public purse. Overall we pay about 3.3 billion pounds in tax every year and it is the Premier League that largely funds the whole football pyramid."

The national lockdown remains in place through Thursday in Britain where more than 28,000 people have died in around two months in hospitals, care homes and the wider community after testing positive for the new coronavirus.

Parish explained "Project Restart" came as the Premier League faced heavy

criticism from one of the main pundits for the broadcaster that provides the league's single biggest revenue stream.

Gary Neville, the former England and Manchester United defender turned Sky Sports commentator, said the Premier League was having a "nightmare" and was "hiding, scared to death of communicating," its plans fully in public. The league has not made any official available for interview since the competition was suspended almost two months ago.

"I want to be clear," Neville said, "I also understand the complexities," Neville said in a response to Parish's tweet linking to his column. "No one wants to be responsible for this one! Just in case the unthinkable happens... I'd respect them more if they said 'We accept the increase in Health Risk but it's our only way of getting it done.' They won't as they are frightened to death!"

## VIRUS OUTBREAK

## COVID-19 testing remains big hurdle for sports

Leagues would need thousands of coronavirus tests every week before they resume games

By TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

MIAMI — Politicians, players and owners are trying to figure out a way to get baseball, basketball and hockey going again, not only for economic reasons but as a welcome diversion for a social distancing nation facing uncertain times.

But to do so would require commandeering thousands of test kits each week for millionaire pro athletes and support staff, something many view as unseemly, especially when ordinary Americans are waiting in line.

Leagues know it would be a terrible look for them to jump the testing line. Acutely aware of the potential backlash, commissioners and owners are saying that, until the public has more access to testing, they don't want to secure tests for players. The NBA even told teams in a memo Thursday that it would be inappropriate to test asymptomatic players and coaches for now — but the league does expect to have testing available when it's time to return to practices and games.

The NBA plans to allow teams to reopen some facilities May 8, but only for voluntary workouts and in cities where local governments allow. And there is no timetable yet for a return to practices and games, in large part because the testing issue remains unsolved.

"We would have to ensure that testing is widely available and front-line health care workers have access before we begin talking about regular testing in the context of professional sports," NBA spokesman Mike Bass said.

The economic impact of sports not happening is beyond enormous: From athletes — NBA players alone stand to lose roughly \$850 million in salaries if this season doesn't resume — to the thousands of part-time workers around stadiums. Broadcasters have lost millions and furloughed thousands of workers, and sports books saw nearly 80% less action this March than they did in March

2019. All of the above reduces tax revenue to local governments.

President Donald Trump wants sports back for both economic and morale reasons, knowing that once games start getting played again, Americans will have something to cheer for — whether fans are in the stands or not. Sports leaders have met with the White House multiple times to discuss that goal. Trump has been critical of testing availability is critical to any restart plans.

"I don't want people to get used to this because this virus is going to be gone," Trump said in a White House coronavirus briefing. "And when it's gone, you bring it get back to normal."

Harvard researchers say the U.S. should be testing at least a half-million people daily, while the White House estimates about 200,000 tests are being administered each day.

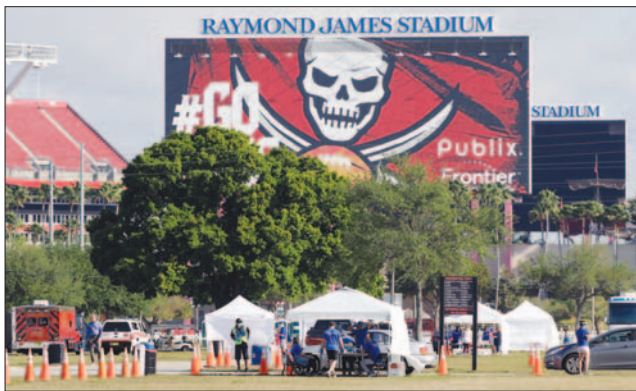
Some teams were sharply criticized for getting their players tested when the pandemic was beginning to take hold in March. The leagues want to avoid a similar blowback.

"The threshold question is the health question. That's where we're spending the most time," MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred said. "The ones that are the most worrisome are the ones that are beyond their control."

According to Major League Baseball, 3,000 kits would need to be available for players, staff, broadcasters and others for every round of testing to get its season going and keep it going. Even if the NHL and NBA return with just 16 postseason teams on the ice and courts, those leagues would likely require tests for a minimum of 1,000 players and staff. And there's no telling how often the tests would be required to be administered.

With tests still in short supply, that's not a great look.

"We know that 50% of people are asymptomatic and we need to catch them before they spread the disease," Dr. Vincent DeGennaro, the CEO of rapid-test maker Aba-



CHRIS O'MEARA/AP

Medical personnel from BayCare test people for the coronavirus in the parking lot outside Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Fla., on March 25. Nobody can say with certainty how many coronavirus tests that the NBA, NHL and Major League Baseball would need before playing games.

**"We would have to ensure that testing is widely available and front-line health care workers have access before we begin talking about regular testing in the context of professional sports."**

Mike Bass  
NBA spokesman

cus Pharma International, told Miami television station WFOR. "And by testing everybody and having those tests here, we should be able to start to get back to some semblance of normalcy and talk about opening up."

Some health care officials have said an equally problematic issue is a shortfall of personal protective equipment — masks, gowns, gloves and the like — that are needed by the people tasked with administering the tests.

"We don't want to use a disproportionate number of testing resources if it's limited," NFL lead counsel Jeff Pash said. "We want to make sure that we're testing

people in an appropriate way if we do it and have clear and consistent standards. I think that we very much would take our guidance on that from the medical and public health experts."

Dr. Rebekah Gee, Louisiana's former health secretary and CEO of Louisiana State University's health services division, said sports should not be considered until the country gets a handle on the sickest people through testing and contact tracing.

"I'm a huge (New Orleans) Saints fan and I want to go to the Superdome too," Gee said. "But am I willing to risk my life for this? No, I'm not. We've got to

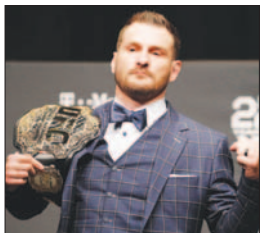
be smart and shouldn't be giving people false reassurances."

The PGA Tour said it is reviewing what it will need from a testing standpoint before its scheduled return to play without fans in June. NASCAR is returning later this month, also without fans — and without COVID-19 testing. Temperatures of every one accessing the track will be taken and other strict precautions will be in place, but for now coronavirus tests are not part of the restart plans.

The NBA, NHL and MLB likely won't have that luxury, for the simple fact that athletes in those sports are often in extremely close contact with one another during play.

"Those tests remain in short supply," NASCAR vice president of racing operations John Bobo said. "Getting results can take two to three days. Really, those tests should be targeted for people most in need."

AP Baseball Writer Ronald Blum, AP Pro Football Writer Rob Maaddi, AP Auto Racing Writer Jenna Fryer and Associated Press Writer Jason Dearn contributed.



JOHN LOCKER/AP

Heavyweight champion Stipe Miocic welcomes the UFC's planned return this week. The fighter and firefighter does have some health concerns, though.

## Despite worries, Miocic welcomes UFC's return

By TOM WITHERS  
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Heavyweight champion Stipe Miocic welcomes UFC's plans to reopen the octagon. The fighter — and firefighter — does have some concerns, though.

After scrapping an idea to hold fights on tribal land in California and canceling or postponing several events since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, UFC will return to competition May 9 in Jacksonville, Florida.

UFC President Dana White recently announced UFC 249 will be held without fans at VyStar Veterans Memorial Arena. Two additional fight cards are scheduled for

May 13 and May 16 at the venue.

Miocic said his only reservation about the sport's reopening is related to health reasons.

"As long as everyone is safe, I hope it works out," said Miocic, who has continued to work as a firefighter and paramedic during the outbreak. "And not just the fighters, I worry about everyone's safety. It takes one person to (infect) three people, and how fast it can spread, it's crazy."

Miocic recaptured his title belt in August by pummeling Daniel Cormier at UFC 241. On Thursday, the affable 37-year-old said his recovery following surgery to repair a torn retina continues to go well. "I have some spots, but definitely I can see" — and that he misses his training routine while

awaiting a return to normalcy.

Until then, Miocic has been working shifts for the Valley View (Ohio) Fire Department. Personal safety is always a priority in his "other" job, and Miocic said he and his co-workers have remained vigilant during these unprecedented times.

"I have a job to do, and when I go to the station, I make sure I stay clean," he said by phone from his home in North Royalton, Ohio. "We're smart. We're clean. We're masked. We wear goggles, gloves and gowns when we have to. It's our routine, so I'm not really worried about that."

Miocic has teamed with Modelo beer to raise funds for personal protection equipment for first responders during the pandemic.



## SPORTS



**Dalton to back up Dak**  
Former Bengals quarterback joins Cowboys on one-year deal » **Page 22**

## AUTO RACING

# End of the road?

Checkered flag nears for pro drivers in virtual racing boom



By DAN GELSTON  
Associated Press

**T**he moment in the virtual sun has arrived for simulated racing and the thousands of gamers who always wanted to race like Dale Earnhardt Jr. or Jeff Gordon at NASCAR tracks from Dover to Daytona.

Sports fans discovered over the last few weeks on national TV a not-so-hidden secret in the racing community: the NASCAR champs and IndyCar drivers wanted to compete like their fans — to hook up a simulator rig, grab a wheel and go head-to-virtual head with the best in

**“Our theory was always, if the racers like it and they find it useful, then the rest of the general public that enjoys this sport is going to enjoy it as well.”**

Steve Myers  
iRacing executive

the field without risking a real slam into the wall at more than 200 mph.

The races have set viewing records, filling the yawning gaps in sports programming and helping make iRacing, headquartered in Chelmsford, Mass., a breakout company during the coronavirus pandemic.

“I don’t think anyone wants a pandemic as the reason why all of a sudden you’re extremely successful,” iRacing executive Steve Myers said. “The only reason why we’ve been able to do this is because we’ve put 16 years worth of work and time into making this platform capable of doing this. It’s been massively successful

for us to put these races on.”

The real hope is the iRacing boom can be sustained without Cup drivers to prop up the series.

With NASCAR set to return May 17, the iRacing Pro Invitational Series will likely go away. The NASCAR-backed iRacing Series, featuring the best sim racers in the field, will continue to run on digital platforms; six races will air on NBCSN during the series’ playoffs. The last race on Fox in the Pro series is scheduled for May 9.

NASCAR’s online competition has been the clear winner among other sports — such as tennis — that have dabbled in

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With NASCAR set to return May 17, the iRacing Pro Invitational Series will likely go away — but after filling the yawning gaps in sports programming and becoming a breakout company during the coronavirus pandemic, there is real hope the iRacing boom can be sustained without Cup drivers to prop up the series.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SEAN VENABLE/Stars and Stripes; AP photo

## TO OUR READERS

As the sports world pauses to join the rest of the world in fighting the coronavirus pandemic, you will see fewer sports stories in Stars and Stripes. We look forward to resuming our normal coverage when the leagues and governing bodies determine it is safe for athletes and fans to return to competition.

